

Bible Class Lessons

Lesson 1

THE CONQUEST OF CANAN

JOSHUA

THE CONQUEST

11

THE CONQUEST OF CANAN

A-3b  
B4712  
C8

THE CONQUEST

THE CONQUEST

11

# The Household Library of Exposition.

**THE SPEECHES OF THE HOLY APOSTLES.** By DONALD FRASER, D.D. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

"Exposition which is useful, instructive, and full of good sense."—*Scotsman*.

**THE LAST SUPPER OF OUR LORD.** By J. MARSHALL LANG, D.D. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

"Earnestness, without a tinge of fanaticism, is the chief characteristic of the work."—*Scotsman*.

**ISAAC, JACOB, AND JOSEPH.** By MARCUS DODS, D.D. Third Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

"For reality, for freshness, for penetration, for insight into character, these chapters are incomparable."—*Christian*.

**ADAM, NOAH, AND ABRAHAM.** By JOSEPH PARKER, D.D. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s.

"Claims very high merit as a popular dramatic pulpit speech."—*British Quarterly*.

**THE LIFE OF DAVID AS REFLECTED IN HIS PSALMS.** By ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D. Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

"It is, we are convinced, the expression of a lifetime of study and careful analysis."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*.

---

## THE GALILEAN GOSPEL.

By the Rev. Professor A. B. BRUCE, D.D.

3s. 6d.

## ECCLESIASTES.

By the Rev. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

3s.

**THE LAMB OF GOD.** Expositions in the Writings of St John.

By the Rev. W. R. NICOLL, M.A.

3s.

## THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

By the Rev. G. S. BARRETT, B.A.

3s. 6d.

---

## EVANGELICAL CLASSICS.

18mo. 2s. 6d. each.

A New Series of Volumes with the above title. Each Volume will contain a Memoir of a distinguished Evangelical Author, founded on a special study, and extracts from his works.

### LEIGHTON.

Edited by the Rev. W. BLAIR, D.D., Dunblane.

### BUNYAN.

Edited by the Rev. W. HOWIE WYLIE.

---

EDINBURGH: MACNIVEN & WALLACE.

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON  
WITHDRAWN  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# CANAAN

AS DIVIDED AMONG  
THE TRIBES

English Miles  
0 10 20 30 40



✓ Bible Class Primers.

EDITED BY PROFESSOR SALMOND, D.D., ABERDEEN

---

J O S H U A :

AND THE

CONQUEST.

BY THE

✓ REV. PROFESSOR CROSKERY

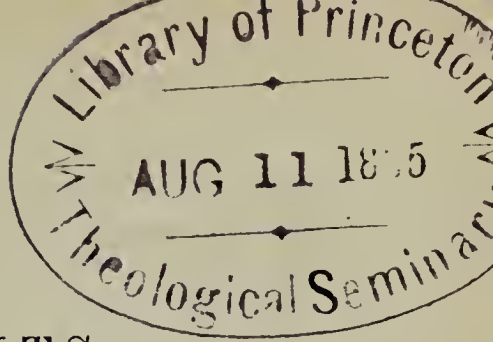
MAGEE COLLEGE, LONDONDERRY.

Edinburgh:

MACNIVEN & WALLACE.

1882.

5CB #16,970



## CONTENTS.

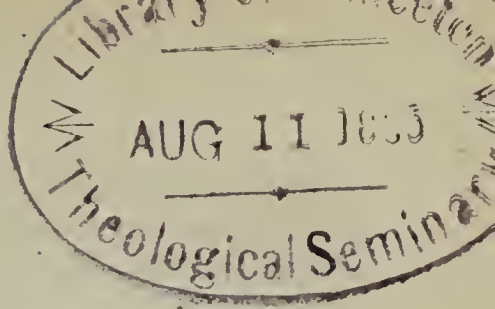
---

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—JOSHUA, . . . . .	7
1. His Parentage and Early Life.—2. His Early Achievements.—3. His Character and Fitness for his Work.	
CHAPTER II.—THE LAND OF PROMISE, . . . . .	10
4. Its Central Situation.—5. Its Secluded Position.—6. Its Extent.	
CHAPTER III.—THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE, 14	
7. Their General Designation.—8. The Individual Tribes or Nations of Canaan.—9. Religion of the old Inhabitants.	
CHAPTER IV.—THE RIGHT OF THE HEBREWS TO PALESTINE, 18	
10. Palestine a Divine Grant.—11. The Dispossession a Divine Judgment on the Canaanites.—12. The Instruments of the Divine Judgment.—13. A Lesson of Warning to the Hebrews.	
CHAPTER V.—THE PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN, . . . . .	22
14. Its Leading Features.—15. The Execution of the Plan.	
CHAPTER VI.—FIRST STAGE OF THE CONQUEST, . . . . .	24
16. The Spirit of the Hebrews at the Opening of the Campaign.—17. Mission of the Spies to Jericho.—18. The Conduct and Character of Rahab.—19. The River Jordan at the Time of Crossing.—20. The Crossing of the Jordan.—21. Memorials of the Crossing and the first Encampment.—22. Renewal of Circumcision and Observance of the Passover.—23. The Capture of Jericho.—24. Destruction of Jericho and its Inhabitants.—25. The Curse on Jericho.—26. The First Military Check of the Hebrews and its Cause.—27. Discovery and Punishment of Achan.—28. Capture of Ai.—29.—The Pilgrimage to Shechem.—30. The Blessing and the Cursing,	

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER VII.—SECOND STAGE OF THE CONQUEST, . . . . .	47
31. The Gibeonite Community.—32. The Stratagem of the Gibeonites and its Success.—33. The Confederacy of Southern Canaan.—34. The Battle of Beth-horon.—35. The Lengthening of Daylight to the Victors.—36. The Complete Conquest of Southern Palestine.	
CHAPTER VIII.—THIRD STAGE OF THE CONQUEST, . . . . .	57
37. The Northern Confederacy.—38. The Battle of Merom.—39. Extermination of the Anakims.—40. General Restropect of the Conquest.	
CHAPTER IX.—DIVISION OF THE LAND, . . . . .	65
41. Principles of the Division.—42. Settlement of Reuben, Gad, and the Half-Tribe of Manasseh.—I. <i>The Tribe of Judah.</i> 43. The Territory of this Tribe.—44. Fortunes of the Tribe.—II. <i>Tribe of Joseph.</i> 45. The Territory of Ephraim and Manasseh.—46. Subsequent History of the Two Tribes.—47. Removal of the Tabernacle to Shiloh.—III. <i>Tribe of Benjamin.</i> 48. Its Territory and History.—IV. <i>Tribe of Simeon.</i> 49. Its Territory and History.—V. <i>Tribe of Zebulun.</i> 50. Its Territory and History.—VI. <i>Tribe of Issachar.</i> 51. Its Territory and History.—VII. <i>Tribe of Asher.</i> 52. Its Territory and History.—VIII. <i>Tribe of Naphtali.</i> 53. Its Territory and History.—IX. <i>Tribe of Dan.</i> 54. Its Territory and History.—X. <i>The Inheritance of Joshua.</i> 55. His Modest Reward.—XI. <i>Cities of Refuge.</i> 56. Their Situation, Privileges, and Immunities.—XII. <i>The Inheritance of Levi.</i> 57. Provision for the Levites.—XIII. <i>Return of the Transjordanic Tribes.</i> 58. Final Incident of the Settlement.—XIV. <i>Results of the Settlement.</i> 59. Socially, Politically, Religiously.	
CHAPTER X.—THE LAST DAYS OF JOSHUA, . . . . .	90
60. His Last Work.—61. Death and Burial of Joshua.	





# JOSHUA AND THE CONQUEST.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### JOSHUA.

1. HIS PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE. The leader of the Hebrews in the conquest of Palestine was Joshua, a prince of the tribe of Ephraim (Num. xiii. 2). His pedigree is preserved in a more perfect form than that of any of his contemporaries (1 Chr. vii. 20-27), and it reaches back through some ten generations to Joseph. His father was Nun, of whom only the name is known. His grandfather, Elishama, marched through the wilderness of Sinai at the head of his tribe (Num. x. 22), and probably had the immediate charge of the embalmed body of Joseph, which was carried up for interment at Shechem (Ex. xiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32). Joshua was born in the land of Goshen, the cradle of the Hebrew nation, in the reign of that long-lived Rameses II., who figures in history as the national hero of the Egyptians (the Sesostris of the Greeks), and the oppressor of the Hebrews. The favourite palace of the king was in Goshen, at Rameses-Tanis, the Zoan of the Bible (Num. xvi. 32), where there was also a vast idol-temple which he restored at immense cost. Joshua must therefore have been familiar from his youth with the sight of palaces, temples, obelisks, sphinxes, and other signs of the ancient civilization, and seen how his countrymen had yielded to the spell of the established idolatry during their long sojourn in th

land of the Nile. One of his last appeals to the heads of the people reminds them how "their fathers worshipped other gods in Egypt" (Josh. xxiv. 14), just as from the age of the captivity a voice recalls how the Hebrews "defiled themselves with the idols of Egypt," and their maidens committed shameless sin (Ezek. xxiii. 8; xx. 7, 8). The hard conditions of his early life, spent in cruel bondage, not less than his contact with a civilisation which fitted Israel for an independent national existence, were a qualification for the great task assigned him in the providence of God. His name was originally Oshea or Hosea, "salvation," but Moses added a syllable containing the name of Jehovah, as if to imply that the son of Nun was to be the instrument of God's salvation to the Hebrews (Num. xiii. 17). It was a singular honour that he should be the first to bear the name which is "above every name" (Phil. ii. 9).

**2. HIS EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS.** Joshua steps forth suddenly out of obscurity. His name first occurs in Scripture in connection with the defeat of Amalek in the first days of the desert life (Exod. xvii. 9). This fierce border tribe, occupying the peninsula of Sinai and the wilderness intervening between the southern hills of Palestine and the border of Egypt, fell upon the rear of the Hebrew host, which was encumbered with women, children, and baggage (Deut. xxv. 18). Joshua had the task of repelling the attack. He won a decisive victory after an obstinate battle, which saved the Hebrews from all further molestation in the peninsula. From this day forward he takes the position of "minister" or attendant of Moses (Exod. xxiv. 13). He ascends the mountain range of Sinai along with his master at the first giving of the law (Exod. xxxii. 17). He is next heard of rebuking the prophesying of Eldad and Medad (Num. xxxii. 17). When Moses resolves to send twelve spies from Kadesh-Barnea to search out the land of Canaan, Joshua is one of the twelve,

standing, no doubt, at the head as the most distinguished (Num. xiii. 1-10). Joshua and Caleb alone of all the spies brought a favourable report, and encouraged the Hebrews "to go up and possess the land" (Num. xiv. 6-9). We know nothing of Joshua during the weary years of the wandering in the Arabian desert. We can well suppose that none of the lessons of that singular period would be lost on the man whom Moses selected by God's command as the military leader who was in less than seven years to lay six nations and thirty-one kings prostrate at his feet (Num. xxvii. 22, 23).

**3. HIS CHARACTER AND FITNESS FOR HIS WORK.** Joshua stands before us simply as a godly warrior, designated to his work by a Divine call. He is "the first soldier consecrated by the sacred history." He was "strong and of a good courage" (Josh. i. 7). The key-note of his character was a remarkable simplicity of faith joined to a severe simplicity of life, an intense patriotism, a courage that feared no danger, and a cheerful and unselfish devotion to duty. He ruled the tribes constitutionally by consulting their representatives in all matters of moment (Josh. xxi. 1). Though they were divided by jealousies, he was able to win their confidence and to secure their co-operation in carrying out the great work of his life. We shall see that he was a splendid strategist in war. There is nothing, however, more remarkable in his life than his complete self-effacement in presence of the tremendous events of the conquest. Scripture is often reticent about its heroes. It is a surprise, however, to find that Joshua's name occurs in no other part of the Old Testament but that which bears his name, though the transactions of the conquest are often referred to. Only twice in the New Testament is he mentioned (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8). Yet he was the greatest Hebrew character between Moses and Samuel—a period of four hundred years—and he alone, we are told, of

all the heroes of Israel after the time of Moses, survives in the traditions of the Samaritans. There is something like solitude in his position at the end of his busy life—"a lonely man in the height of his power, separate from those about him, the last survivor, save one, of a famous generation"—and [the silence of Scripture almost warrants the supposition that he was without wife or child or heir. This was the man so highly gifted by nature, by grace, and by opportunity, whom God raised up to lead the Hebrew tribes into Palestine.

#### QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *Trace the genealogy of Joshua, and mark the relation of Ephraim to the other tribes, both in Egypt and in Palestine.*
2. *Trace the history of the Amalekites.*
3. *Explain the meaning of the "prophesying" of Eldad and Medad.*
4. *Notice the exigencies that tested the firmness of Joshua as the leader of the tribes.*

---

## CHAPTER II.

### THE LAND OF PROMISE.

4. **ITS CENTRAL SITUATION.** The future home of the Hebrews—called Canaan by themselves, and Palestine by all the world since the time of the Romans—was selected by Jehovah with an evident regard to their future destiny. They were to be the heart of the nations, out of which life should flow to the ends of the earth. So it is said, "This is Jerusalem : I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries round about her" (Ezek. v. 5). Their

bounds were fixed in relation to other nations: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8). Palestine lay right in the middle of the three great divisions of the ancient world. The highways by land and water, connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe, passed through it. Syria was to the north, Egypt to the south, Assyria to the east, and the Isles of the Gentiles to the west. Though it is now in the very outskirts of civilization, it was then "the vanguard of the eastern, and therefore of the civilised world, standing midway between the two great seats of ancient empire, Babylon and Egypt." Thus set in the midst of the world's highway, the sanctuary of Jehovah was destined to become a centre from which religious influences were to radiate to the ends of the earth. The central situation of the land likewise exposed it, in the days of its apostasy, to many chastisements from the great powers of the world.

5. ITS SECLUDED POSITION. Israel was to dwell apart from the nations. Balaam prophesied that "the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. xxiii. 9; Deut. xxxiii. 28; Jer. xlix. 31). They were to be a well-fenced vineyard (Isa. v. 1). Their country was almost as isolated as if it had been an island. It had Lebanon for a mountain barrier on the north, stretching from the sea to the eastern desert; it was girdled by deserts on the east and south; and it had the Mediterranean sea on the west, along which there were few landing-places or inlets for ships. To the enterprising race of Japhet, such a sea-board would have formed a highway of communication with the most distant parts of the world. But Oriental nations, with the single exception of the Phœnicians, have never liked the sea. The Mediterranean, too, had not at this time become the thoroughfare of the

world. Palestine proper, that is, the territory west of the Jordan, stood in still deeper seclusion, between the sea on the one side and the valley of the Jordan on the other, with its northern and southern boundaries closely guarded by Lebanon and the wilderness. This position of the Hebrew race was exactly of the sort to keep them apart from the rest of the world in the early part of their career, when they were to receive special training for their duties and destinies as God's peculiar people. The time was to come when their dispersion might take place with safety to themselves and advantage to the world. When their country was incorporated into the Roman Empire, paths were thrown open for the gospel to all the nations of the world, and the Hebrews were then to make their home in every land to which they were driven. Palestine was henceforth to be regarded as "the spiritual home of all nations."

6. ITS EXTENT. This is plainly described in God's promise to Abraham—"Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18), that is, from the valley of the Euphrates, the largest and most important of the rivers of Western Asia, to the valley of the Nile. It is more minutely described in the message to Joshua—"From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites"—that is, of the Canaanites generally—"and unto the great sea to the going down of the sun, shall be your coast" (Josh. i. 4). These words define the extreme limits of the kingdom as it stood in the days of Solomon, when "all the kings from the river (Euphrates) even unto the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt" were tributary to Solomon (1 Kings iv. 21). But Palestine itself, the central spot in which the Hebrews were reared as God's peculiar people, was a small and narrow country, about the size of Wales, less than 140 miles in length, and with an

average breadth of barely 40 miles. It is said that from almost every high point its whole breadth is visible from the long wall of the Moab hills in the east to the Mediterranean sea in the west, while Mount Hermon in the north can be seen from the southern end of the Dead Sea. The whole territory, including that of the Transjordanic tribes, has been estimated at 13,000 square miles. Its smallness imparted a far stronger cohesion to the tribes settled in it than if they had been more widely dispersed, while "the theocratic constitution could be more thoroughly worked under conditions of easy access to the ecclesiastical centre of the country." But its smallness, like that of Greece, stands in remarkable contrast with its historic greatness, while there is something extremely touching in the contrast between its present nothingness as a land of physical beauty and greatness, and the glory of the events to which it gave birth. Changed as the land is now, in the days of Joshua it was a glorious gift from the Most High, not only for its situation but from its fertility, as "a land flowing with milk and honey."

#### QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *Mark the fitness of Palestine as the destined home of the seed of Abraham?*

2. *Trace the connection between its geographical structure and the history of its people?*

3. *Trace the historic relation of the country to the great empires of antiquity.*

4. *How do we account for the contrast between the past fertility and the present barrenness of the Holy Land?*

---

## CHAPTER III.

## THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE.

7. THEIR GENERAL DESIGNATION. The inhabitants were generally known at the conquest by the name of Canaanites, and Palestine was "the land of Canaan" (Gen. x. 18; xiii. 12). The Canaanites, a powerful tribe of the race of Ham (Gen. x. 15-18) were not the earliest dwellers in the land. It is believed that the first inhabitants were descendants of Shem, and that the Canaanites took their place peacefully beside them, learning their language and imitating their ways of life. Thus they spoke a tongue quite intelligible to the Hebrews. We find the whole people, at an earlier period, called "Amorites" (Gen. xv. 19), and Palestine is called three times "the land of the Hittites" (Josh. i. 4). It is startling to be reminded that Canaanite is but another name for Phœnician, "that the detested and accursed race, as it appears in the Books of Joshua and Judges, is the same as that to which from Greece we look back as the parent of letters, of commerce, and of civilization." The Canaanites were Phœnicians. Sidon, the great Phœnician city, was founded by Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan, and the Syro-Phœnician woman in the New Testament is called "a woman of Canaan" (Mark vii. 26; Matt. xv. 22). The Phœnicians, during the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt, had reached the height of commercial greatness. They were the English of antiquity. But it was not understood till lately that under the name of Hittites the people of Canaan were known at an early period of the world's history, with a power for war and for peace that placed them on an equality with Babylon and Egypt. The Hittite empire at one time extended from the Euphrates to the shores of the Grecian archipelago, and "was powerful enough to



threaten Assyria on the one hand and Egypt on the other, and to carry the arts and culture of the Euphrates to the Euxine and Ægean seas." We have records of them in the Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions, where they are called Khita or Hittites. "Till within the last few years the Bible alone has preserved the name of a people who must have had almost as great an influence on human history as Assyria or Egypt." Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Kadesh on the Orontes, north of Palestine, were the chief centres of the Hittite power. Palestine was only part of these wide territories, and its conquest by Joshua, followed by an Egyptian invasion of Syria, gave a blow to this empire from which it never recovered.

8. THE INDIVIDUAL TRIBES OR NATIONS OF CANAAN. At the time of the conquest, Palestine is represented as occupied by seven nations—the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites (Deut. vii. 1). It is interesting to observe that most of the tribes bear the names of the sons of Canaan in the famous table of nations (Gen. x. 15-18).

1. *Hittites*. These were perhaps at this time a comparatively feeble branch of the great Hittite stock. They dwelt in and around Hebron in the time of Abraham, who bought a field from "Ephron the Hittite" (Gen. xxiii. 19; xxv. 9). They appear to have inhabited Mount Ephraim and the mountains of Judea, once appearing so far south as Beersheba (Num. xiii. 29). Esau married Hittite women. Two of David's captains, Uriah and Ahimelech, were Hittites (1 Sam. xxv. 6; 2 Sam. xxiii. 39). The name Hittite was that by which Palestine was usually known to foreign countries. 2. *Canaanites*. They occupied the sea-coast as far north as Dan, a considerable part of the plain of Esdraelon and of the valley of the Jordan. They were "lowlanders," as the name signifies, possessing the less mountainous

parts (Num. xiii. 29). 3. *Amorites*. These were the "mountaineers," as their name signifies, and they are usually found in the mountains. Before the conquest they occupied those parts which afterwards fell to Judah and Simeon. In the time of Abraham they were settled at Engedi, which lies about the middle of the western shore of the Dead Sea, and stretched westward to Hebron (Gen. xiv. 7). They afterwards appear as stretching from Maaleh-acrab-bim, their extreme southern border, to Ephraim northwards (Judg. i. 34-36). They also spread across the Jordan, and took all the country between the Jabbok and the Arnon, displacing the Moabites and Ammonites, as these had displaced the earlier Rephaim (Num. xxi. 13-26; Judg. xi. 13). Kings Sihon and Og are both called Amorites. 4. *Girgashites*. They were a tribe of minor importance, who seem to have belonged to Western Palestine (Josh. xxiv. 11), not to the country east of the Lake of Genesareth. 5. *Perizzites*. In Abraham's day Palestine was the country of "the Canaanite and the Perizzite" (Gen. xiii. 7). The Perizzites seem to have held the wooded hills of Central and Southern Palestine. Along with the Rephaim, they occupied the forest country on the western flanks of Mount Carmel (Josh. xvii. 15). Their name possibly signifies the dwellers in open unwall'd villages who lived by agriculture. A remnant of them survived as tributaries of Solomon (1 Kings ix. 20). 6. *Hivites*. We first hear of them when Jacob returned to Canaan (Gen. xxxiv. 2) as dwelling at Shechem. A colony of them dwelt in the north under the Lebanon range (Josh. xi. 3). The Gibeonites were Hivites. The people were peaceful and commercial, living under a republican government. 7. *Jebusites*. They were a small but warlike tribe in possession of the central highlands around Jebus or Jerusalem, their stronghold (Josh. xv. 8, 63). They held Jebus, or, more properly, "the upper city" of Zion, till the time of David, when Joab stormed it (1 Chron. xi. 4-8).

## 9. RELIGION OF THE OLD INHABITANTS.

The Phœnician or Canaanite religion, which seems to have been the parent of the religions of Greece and Rome, has been justly described as “a religion of human sacrifices, licentious orgies, the worship of a host of divinities.” It was a deification of the forces of nature. The chief god of the Canaanites was Baal, the Sun, who was worshipped as Moloch by the Ammonites, and as Chemosh by the Moabites. He represented the creative force in nature. His worship was manifest everywhere in grove and altar and image, and left its trace upon such names of places as Baal-gad, Baal-Hermon, Baal-Perazim. Terror was the first principle of this religion. It authorised human sacrifices, an only child being regarded as the most precious of sacrifices (2 Kings iii. 26, 27). The Hebrews were in after ages censured for having adopted its cruel practices (Ps. cvi. 37-39). The consort of Baal was the goddess Astarte or Ashtoreth, whose worship was unspeakably impure. Altars to these two deities were everywhere in Palestine, on hill-tops, on artificial mounds, under green trees, in valleys, on house-tops, in the market-places of towns. Their temples adorned every considerable city. We may see the bright side of polytheism in Greece; we see its dark side in Palestine. There was a stern contrast between the lofty monotheism of the Hebrews and the cruel polytheism of the Canaanites, as well as between the moral purity of the one and the licensed debasement of the other. The time was surely come for God to rise in judgment against a race in the last stage of moral corruption.

### QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *Trace the origin of the Canaanites from the genealogical table of Genesis x., as well as the course of their future dispersion.*

2. *How do we account for the Semitic language of a Hamite race like the Canaanites?*

3. *Name the aboriginal races which had disappeared before the conquest.*

4. *How do we account for the fact that the country should be known at different periods as that of the "Canaanites," "the Amorites," and "the Hittites" respectively?*

5. *Trace the relation of the Canaanite religion to that of Asia as well as to those of Greece and Rome.*

---

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RIGHT OF THE HEBREWS TO PALESTINE.

10. PALESTINE A DIVINE GRANT. Joshua was commanded to provide a home for the Hebrews in Canaan by exterminating its ancient inhabitants. The command was express—"But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth;" "Thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them" (Deut. vii. 2; xx. 16). Those who were not destroyed were driven out. The question suggested by this Divine command involves two distinct points—the right of the Hebrews to the territory of Canaan, and the morality of the warfare by which it was to be wrested from its old inhabitants. The land was purely God's gift. To Abraham the Lord said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. xii. 7). The right of the Hebrews to Palestine has been defended on the ground of a prior occupancy by the patriarchs, as though a claim had thus been created which their descendants were now asserting by force of arms. We must remember, however, that the Canaanites were in the land before Abraham had

entered it at all, that he dwelt there as "a stranger," and had even to purchase a burial-place, so that Stephen might truly say that God gave Abraham "none inheritance in it, not so much as to set his foot on" (Acts vii. 5). Besides, if the Hebrews had a right on this ground, had it not lapsed with time? The fact is expressly stated that the land was theirs by the gift of Him who fixes for nations, as for individuals, the bounds of their habitation. He took it from the Canaanites, who had forfeited it by their sins, and gave it to the Hebrews, that it might become the platform on which the kingdom of God should be erected.

11. THE DISPOSSESSION A DIVINE JUDGMENT ON THE CANAANITES. The people were to be destroyed or driven out on account of their wickedness. This is the express statement of Scripture. Their idolatry was of the most impure and degrading kind, admitting of crimes which, in the ordinary course of Divine providence, would have involved any nation in a lingering death. The fearful abominations which we shudder to read in Leviticus xviii.-xx. are expressly said to have been committed by "the men of the land;" and the Hebrews are earnestly warned against them—"Defile not yourselves in any of these things, for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you; and the land is defiled; therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants" (Lev. xviii. 24, 25). The most revolting cruelty was likewise practised as part of the Canaanite religion. There is not a state, even at the present day, that would not put down such crimes and cruelties, just as suttee was put down by the English in India. Even heathen satirists like Juvenal, fifteen hundred years after Moses, lamented the spread of this religion to Rome as a sure precursor of national decay. The Canaanites, too, were incorrigible offenders. They were so when Abraham entered

their land four centuries before, but “the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full”—language which implies that the height of their wickedness would fully justify their ultimate destruction. They had learned nothing from the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the southern part of their land. They had learned nothing from the example of such eminent persons as Melchizedec and Abraham, who dwelt in their midst. The judgment was not inflicted without warning. The Canaanites heard of the plagues of Egypt, of the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, of the conquest of the kings of Gilead and Bashan, of the judgment on the Hebrews themselves for their share in the abominations of Baal-peor. They might have learned that the God who had brought the Hebrews to the edge of their land was a God who would sternly punish all impurity. But there were no signs of repentance among them. The judgments of God, therefore, overtook them. It has been maintained that the Hebrews were not commanded to exterminate the Canaanites without exception, but only such as refused their offers of peace (Deut. xx. 10, 15). This passage, however, refers not to Canaanites but to foreigners, who might be allowed to become vassals to Israel. The Canaanites were not to be received either as vassals or as subjects. The fact that the Gibeonites resorted to fraud to obtain peace implies that they could not procure it in any other way. It is an undoubted fact that the Canaanites were to be destroyed or driven out of the land. This alternative was allowed—“I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and thou shalt drive them out before thee” (Ex. xxiii. 31; see also Num. xxxiii. 51, 52. But the command was equally positive to destroy all who remained in the land. How are we to reconcile such a command with the moral attributes of God? We answer, that if we acknowledge a moral government at all, we must acknowledge God’s right “to remove summarily

from His dominions a mass of hopeless depravity, which, like a carcass, taints the air and poisons the atmosphere of the world." Besides, if the Hebrews, who were the trustees of the religion of the world, had sunk to the level of the Canaanites, the world would have been in danger of losing the knowledge of God. It has been remarked that "the Israelites' sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world." The occasional lapses of the Hebrews into idolatry, arising for the most part from their imperfect obedience to the Divine command, showed that severity was true mercy to man, and suggest the thought that had the Canaanites been wholly extirpated or driven out, and Hebrew ascendancy established from Lebanon to the wilderness, and from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt, "the principles of humanity now gaining ground among us might have been ante-dated."

**12. THE INSTRUMENTS OF THE DIVINE JUDGMENT.** There is the farther question to be considered, whether it was consistent with God's character to employ the Hebrews as the executioners of His judgments. In this case hornets and tempests of hail were among His instruments (cf. Ps. xlv. 3). But here, as often elsewhere, He employed man to punish man. Babylon was used to punish Judea, Persia to humble the pride of Babylon, Greece to scourge Persia, Rome to lower the pride of Greece, and the northern barbarians to overwhelm Rome in its turn. If sinful nations can be thus employed in the providence of God, why may not a holy nation be used as the conscious instrument of Divine vengeance? There is no door left open here for the fanaticism that imagines a Divine commission to kill men of a different faith. The Hebrews were under special Divine guidance, for God fed them from the skies, cut a passage for them through the Jordan, threw down the walls of Jericho, and slew their

enemies with hailstones. This war supplies no justification for either wars of religion or wars of conquest. Those who claim to follow the Hebrews' example must show the same proofs of a Divine commission.

13. A LESSON OF WARNING TO THE HEBREWS. God warns them that the judgments they were to execute upon the Canaanites would be executed as terribly upon themselves in case of their apostasy (Deut. xxviii. 25). They were told that their land was held by no other tenure than that which the Canaanites were destroyed for infringing; and nothing could have been better adapted for qualifying the Hebrews to be the channels of blessing to mankind than these dreadful proofs at the beginning of their national history of God's abhorrence of sin. The time came at last, after an interval of fifteen hundred years, when the Hebrews themselves forfeited their possession of this very land, and were scattered over the world for their sins.

#### QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *Explain the tenure by which the Hebrews obtained, and the Canaanites forfeited, the possession of Palestine.*
2. *What was there in the religion of the Canaanites to justify the heaviest Divine judgments?*
3. *Show how, in the course of human history, nations are employed to punish nations for their transgressions.*
4. *Mark the bearing of these judgments upon the future history of the Hebrew people.*

---

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN.

14. ITS LEADING FEATURES. Though Palestine was thus a Divine gift to the Hebrews, and placed



in their hands by an extraordinary exercise of Divine power, it is plain that the invasion was a skilfully prepared enterprise. There was the amplest room for military strategy even inside the sphere of Divine direction. The despatch of the spies to explore the country around Jericho showed that human precaution was necessary. The idea of the mass of the Hebrew people was to attack Palestine from the south as the most natural point from their position. Forty years before, they had made an unsuccessful attempt to force their way into the country across the southern frontier (Num. xiv. 45). Under any circumstances, it would have been a very formidable enterprise to invade the land from this point, for the south, always threatened on the side of Egypt, bristled with fortresses. Had Joshua tried to enter it from the south, he would have been confronted by a constantly increasing mass of enemies, who would have been reinforced at every step backwards, and protected by fresh lines of fortification in a country singularly adapted for the purposes of defence. His plan was to lead them round the southern borders of the country, and to fling them upon its poorly defended eastern flank near the Dead Sea. In other words, he was resolved to turn the fortresses of the south, and take them, if necessary, in reverse. The Canaanites might imagine themselves secure on the eastern side with the Jordan overflowing its banks, but they could not possibly know of the miraculous interposition that was to lay open their land to the free entrance of the invader. Joshua, by choosing a weak point near the middle of the frontier, executes the favourite manœuvre of Napoleon by breaking through the centre of the enemy's line, and then striking with his whole force right and left in rapid succession. His plan showed undoubted military skill.

15. THE EXECUTION OF THE PLAN. The capture of Jericho, the first notable incident in the

campaign, supplied Joshua with a secure basis of operations. The fall of Ai, which immediately followed, opened the passes into the interior; and the defection of the Gibeonites enabled him to drive home a wedge between northern and southern Palestine, so as to cut the country in two and defeat the confederacy of the southern kings before the northern confederacy had recovered from its panic. There were thus three stages in the conquest: the first represented by the capture of Jericho, and of the passes into the interior; the second, by the defeat of the southern confederacy; and the third, by the defeat of the northern confederacy. Joshua crushed the Canaanites in detail. The political constitution of the country, cut up as it was into many petty kingdoms, made a combined defence under a single leader impossible. The decisive battle-scenes of the conquest were therefore Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, Bethhoron, and Merom.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### FIRST STAGE OF THE CONQUEST.

16. THE SPIRIT OF THE HEBREWS AT THE OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN.—(Num. xxxiii. 49). They were now encamped, a nation of two millions, in the plains of Moab, in the rich depression of the Jordan valley, stretching from Abel-Shittim in the north to Bethjeshimoth in the south, close to the Dead Sea. As the name Shittim suggests, they were dwelling among the acacia trees that are even now common to the whole district, and were surrounded on every side by the richest vegetation. Here were assembled the future conquerors of Palestine, not the old and wayward race that had

come out of Egypt, but a hardier generation that had profited by the terrible discipline of the wilderness. No two generations of men ever contrasted more thoroughly than the fathers who crossed the Red Sea, and the sons who were now to cross the Jordan. The very shame and disaster of Baal-peor only intensified the zeal of Joshua's warriors to make an utter end of every trace of Canaanite idolatry. At this supremely critical moment, the tribes were happily animated by one spirit. The alacrity with which the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, responded to the demand of Joshua, that they should accompany their brethren to the conquest of Palestine, though it was but the fulfilment of a solemn engagement (Num. xxxii.), helped to cement the brotherly relation between the tribes. Thus, the vast host, rejoicing in the protecting care of Jehovah, who guarded them "as the apple of his eye" (Deut. xxxii. 8, 10), were ready to advance upon their new inheritance.

**17. MISSION OF THE SPIES TO JERICHO<sup>a</sup>**  
(Josh. ii. 1-24). The first action taken by Joshua in preparing for the conquest, was to send two spies to examine Jericho and its neighbourhood. This city, one of great importance and antiquity, being a strongly-walled place, was about seven miles west of the Jordan, lying on the very frontiers of Palestine. It was the key of the country, because it commanded the entrance of the main passes into the interior, one of which branched off toward Jerusalem, the other towards Michmash, defending the approach

<sup>a</sup> The order of events, as recorded in the opening chapters of Joshua, seems to be this:—The spies were sent out on the 3rd Nisan (ii. 7), and returned on the 6th, for they abode three days, or till the third day in the mountain, after Rahab had dismissed them; on the 7th the camp is removed to the bank of Jordan (iii. 1), and the command is issued on the same day to prepare victuals for the crossing (i. 11), and on the 10th the river is crossed (iv. 19.) The sacred writers here, as often elsewhere, follow the order of thought rather than the order of time. Joshua would not have given the order to cross the river till after the spies had returned, as their information would naturally determine the time and circumstances of his subsequent action.

to Ai and Bethel. It was called the city of palm trees (Deut. xxxiv. 3), from a great grove of palm trees which lay between it and the river. On the western side it was encircled by a barren range of mountains running north and south, and enjoyed the benefit of one or two springs of water, which account for the fertility of the Jordan valley. Every trace of Jericho seems to have disappeared.<sup>a</sup> The two spies were probably commanded to see in what part the city could be most easily attacked, and whether the citizens were prepared for a serious resistance. They entered the city towards evening (Josh. ii. 2), and instead of going to a public khan, where they might have been quickly recognized, they followed a harlot, named Rahab, to her home on the wall (15 v.; cf. Heb. xi. 31; James ii. 25), and there sought a lodging. This woman became afterwards the wife of Salmon, the son of Naason, by whom she became the mother of Boaz, the grandfather of Jesse, the father of David (Matt. i. 5; Ruth iv. 20. 21; 1 Chron. ii. 11, 54, 55). The spies were hid among the stalks of flax laid out to dry on the flat roof of her house. Even here, however, they were quickly noticed as strangers, and the petty king of Jericho, alarmed by the success of the Hebrews on the east of Jordan (v. 9) sent messengers in search of them. Rahab baffled their inquiries, by saying, "I wist not whence they were,"—"whither the men went, I wot not"—and led them to turn their steps downwards towards the fords of the Jordan. She then urged the spies to depart at once to the mountain which overhangs Jericho to the north. But before sending them away, she professed her faith in the power of the Lord to give the land to the Hebrews, spoke of the hearts of the inhabitants as melting with fear, and besought protection for herself

<sup>a</sup> There is no reason to believe that the miserable little village of Riha stands upon its ruins. Riha is probably on the south side of the ancient Jericho.

and her father's family at the sack of Jericho. The spies promised her protection, on condition that she should gather her relatives into her house, and suspend a scarlet thread from the window, by which the Hebrews would be able to recognize her dwelling. She then let the spies down secretly from a window of her house, which overlooked the city wall. For three days (22 v.) they hid themselves in the neighbourhood, and then escaped back in safety to Shittim, probably by swimming the Jordan. They gave Joshua such a favourable report concerning Jericho and its people—the main point being the alarm and despondency of the Canaanites at the approach of the Hebrews—that he at once commanded the vast host to move forward to the banks of the river.

18. **THE CONDUCT AND CHARACTER OF RAHAB** (Heb. xi. 31 ; James ii. 25). Much has been said about the difficulty of reconciling what is recorded about her faith with her falsehoods and her treachery to her countrymen. Her faith was both sound and practical, and is commended accordingly in the New Testament. She believed that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the God of heaven and earth, and that it was His design to put the Hebrews in possession of Palestine ; and the ground of her faith was the miraculous drying up of the Red Sea, and the presence of more than human power in the Hebrew camp. Her faith was manifest in works, by her peaceful reception of the spies. She displayed a singular courage ; for it was at the risk of her life that she gave them shelter. Her anxiety to save her father's family shows that she had not lost the sense of natural affection. Her confidence in the sanctity of an oath, is also to be noticed (Josh. ii. 12). Her whole conduct had its root in faith. It may not have been a strong faith, for she had had few advantages, and could have known but little of Jehovah ; yet it was there, and therefore she—the solitary believer in

Jericho—"perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." (Heb. xi. 31). But what are we to think of her falsehoods? Scripture records them simply without expressing any opinion upon her conduct. They are not to be justified as lies told for a good purpose, nor as lies which could hardly be regarded as such under the law till the gospel had introduced a purer morality. A lie is always a lie, and Rahab is commended by the apostles, not for her falsehoods but for her faith. The pressure of her circumstances and her heathen training, may explain her conduct, but cannot justify it. The course she adopted may have been a sin of weakness, which was forgiven her on account of her faith, or a sin of ignorance, but we are sure, with Matthew Henry, that God discriminated between what was good in her conduct and what was bad, "rewarding the former and pardoning the latter." And as to her treachery to her countrymen, she had come to see that the cause of the Hebrews was that of the true God, and that the claims of God were supreme above all other claims. When her heart was once purified by faith, she could not but desire the overthrow of the system that had polluted her own life and that of her nation. As a matter of fact, however, her action in concealing the spies may have had but little influence upon the fate of Jericho, which was overturned by more than natural means.

**19. THE RIVER JORDAN AT THE TIME OF CROSSING** (Josh. iii. 15-17). This remarkable river, which now rolled its swollen waters between the Canaanites and their invaders, springs from sources in the spurs of Lebanon, at a great height above the sea, expanding first into the Lake Merom, thence afterwards into the Lake of Tiberias or Sea of Galilee, and ending its rapid course in the Dead Sea. It was now in the month Abib (part of our April and part of May), when the barley and flax harvests are

ripe. The hot weather would have thoroughly set in, and the snows of Hermon would have been melting fast, so that a perfect torrent would be rushing downward into the Dead Sea. The river would then be "overflowing all his banks" (or rather, "full up to all his banks") "all the time of harvest." Some travellers have denied that the Jordan is swollen in harvest. But they refer to the wheat harvest, which occurs fifty days later than the barley harvest, which is the period here referred to. The time of the barley and flax harvests was identical. So we find, as a sort of undesigned coincidence, that, three days before the event here recorded, the undried stalks of flax were lying exposed to the sun on the top of Rahab's house in Jericho.<sup>a</sup> The yellow and turbid stream rushed along like a flood. Yet this was the time selected for crossing the swollen river. The Hebrews would thus recognise in the miracle they were now to witness a sure sign that Palestine was not to be their conquest, but God's gift. There was no human agency then known that could have safely carried them across the river. When the Goths, in the fourth century, nearly a million of people, crossed the Danube to seek a home in the south of Europe, they had a fleet of vessels at their command. The crossing occupied several days, and many lives were lost. How were two millions of Hebrews to cross the Jordan without vessels of any kind? The Lord Himself with His own hand was to open the doors of the land, and to conduct His people in.

20. THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN (Josh. iii. 15-17.)—This marvellous event took place on the tenth day of Abib or Nisan (as it was afterwards called) exactly forty years after the Hebrews had left Egypt. The people had previously prepared three days' provisions and had moved down to the

<sup>a</sup> It is not stated how high the waters were at the time of the crossing, but Canon Tristram found a few years ago that the river had been fourteen feet above the level at which he saw it, and yet it was still many feet above its ordinary level.

edge of the river from their camping place among the acacia-groves. The pillar of cloud had disappeared, probably with the death of Moses. But the ark of the covenant, as the symbol of the Divine Presence, took its place, and was borne before the hosts of Israel on the shoulders of the "priests the Levites"\* (iii. 3). The order of advance to the river was as follows: the priests bearing the ark went in front and the people marched behind, keeping a distance of nearly a mile, not merely in token of reverence for the sacred symbol, but that they might mark the road by which they should cross, and be the better able to observe the miracle wrought on their behalf. Then in the van marched forty thousand men of the Transjordanic tribes, contrary to their usual position (Num. xxxii. 20) but in visible token of their solemn vow (iv. 12); then, according to tradition, the women and the children in the centre, and the rest of the armed men in the rear. Now was seen an amazing miracle. The priests had hardly touched with their feet the broken edge of the swollen waters, when the bed of the Jordan was dried up before them. They marched on, their bare feet sinking in the soft ooze as they advanced to the middle of the channel (Josh. iv. 18), and there they stood, hour after hour, till the whole host of two million souls had marched across. It is probable that the host crossed it at different points along a breadth of a mile or two—they "rushed across" (Josh iv. 10)—probably in their anxiety to relieve the priests as soon as possible from their wearisome position. It is conjectured that the crossing might have been done in half a day if the people formed a procession of a mile or upwards in breadth. There was in point of fact a space of twenty or thirty miles of the dried bed of the Jordan which they might have crossed at any point. Meanwhile the stream, checked in its course, "rose up, one heap, very far off at the city

\* That is, the priests, who were of the tribe of Levi.



Adam, that is beside Zaretan"—(iii. 16), or Zarthan (1 Kings iv. 12), the situation of which is unknown, although it is believed to have been near Succoth, at the mouth of the Jabbok (1 Kings vii. 46) thirty miles north of the crossing place. It was probably the same as Zereda, the birthplace of Jeremiah. Adam is placed by some south of the Jabbok, where the ford Damieh now exists, while others identify it with Admah in the plain of Jordan (Gen. xiv. 2). The first is the more probable view. Thus, the scene of this miracle is not that of a broad stream parted asunder, but of a stream "driven backwards," (Ps. cxiv. 3); while at the same moment, the waters that ran on downwards, toward "the sea of the plain," the Dead Sea, "failed and were cut off" (Josh. iii. 16), and the dry river bed was exposed to view for twenty or thirty miles of its course from north to south. In this way the whole host crossed over below, while the ark stood above; and beyond it, but far out of sight, was the heap of water held back by God's hand. After all had passed over, the priests with the ark stepped ashore on the western side, and immediately the waters rolled down as before in their accustomed channel. Thus was accomplished an event more important than the founding of Rome, the Saxon invasion, the Norman Conquest, or the discovery of America. The narrative is singularly consistent with itself. Had the Hebrews entered Palestine in an ordinary manner, the fords would have been unusually low, and the Canaanites would have fiercely disputed the passage of the invaders. But there is no account of a battle at the Jordan, either in the Hebrew history or in any other, while the lowness of the fords is inconsistent with the time of the crossing. There is no hint of means being used to carry the Hebrews across, or of any attempt to break the force of the current. The history records an act of supernatural power put forth to provide a way for the Hebrews

across the bare channel of a rapid and rushing stream. "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?"

21. MEMORIALS OF THE CROSSING AND THE FIRST ENCAMPMENT (Josh. iv. 1-24). The vast host now wended its way up the banks of the river to the wide plain which lies along its western side. Twelve large stones, selected by the twelve chiefs of the tribes from the bare channel of the Jordan, were carried aloft before the priests, and placed in the upper terrace of the valley in the centre of their first encampment at Gilgal. This spot, five miles from the river and two from the city of Jericho, had a sacred interest for ages (Josh. ix. 6, x. 43). It was the site of the Tabernacle during the continuance of the wars, and became the familiar gathering-place of the tribes for centuries. It was afterwards one of Samuel's three important assize towns (1 Sam. vii. 16), and the site of a school of the prophets in the days of Elisha (2 Kings ii. 5).<sup>a</sup> These twelve memorial stones came afterwards to be regarded with a superstitious veneration (Judges iii. 19, 28; Hosea iv. 13; ix. 15). There was a second memorial erected in the Jordan itself on the spot where the priests' feet rested during the passage of the people, probably near the eastern bank (Josh. iii. 8, 17). This heap of stones would be visible when the river fell, and was visible at the writing of the history. It does not matter whether this memorial afterwards disappeared, for it was specially designed for that generation, while other generations would be more deeply impressed by the memorial at Gilgal. The Hebrews were now in the enemy's country. Joshua would naturally fortify Gilgal for the safety of the multitude, who had now learned that Jehovah was unlimited in his power,

<sup>a</sup> A mound about three miles from the supposed site of Jericho is still known as Jilgilieh. Tristram identifies Riha with Gilgal, while Bartlett places it a mile east of Riha.

and that their success depended upon their perfect submission to his guidance.

22. RENEWAL OF CIRCUMCISION AND OBSERVANCE OF THE PASSOVER (Josh. v. 1-12). The terror that had come upon the Amorites and the Canaanites afforded a convenient opportunity for renewing the rite of circumcision which had fallen into abeyance during the eight-and-thirty years' wandering in the Arabian desert. The faithless generation that had come out of Egypt had been circumcised ; but their children born in the desert had not. This was not from want of opportunity. They had many intervals of rest, notably one of eleven months at Sinai, when the rite could have been conveniently performed. The reason was that the nation was under judgment since the event of Kadesh-Barnea (Num. xiv. 29). The covenant was suspended, and its significant rite was accordingly omitted. Circumcision was the condition of God's giving them the land (Gen. xvii. 5-14). But the rejection was neither total nor final. Accordingly, now that the Hebrews were in the land of promise, the time was come for the renewal of the rite. The Lord says to Joshua, "Return to circumcise them the second time"—not as implying that they had been circumcised already, but as implying a return to a former condition, namely, that of a circumcised nation. Accordingly about three quarters of a million of people—that is, all above thirty-eight years of age—were now circumcised with knives of flint, which were afterwards preserved as sacred relics. The whole nation having thus been taken anew into covenant with the Lord, the next step was to keep the Passover, which was doubtless suspended since they left Sinai (Num. ix. 1). Now, again, after thirty-eight years, in the fourteenth day of the month Nisan—in the evening of which day forty years before the Passover was instituted in the land of Egypt—the paschal lamb was slain at Gilgal. The feast would have all the charm of novelty to the vast

majority of the people, and would no doubt be kept with a solemn joy. It is evident that the Passover spoken of in v. 10, which occupied a full week, included at least in part the feast of unleavened bread, for the 11th verse says—"On the morrow after the Passover they ate of the produce of the land" (not "the old corn" as in the Authorised Version, but the stored grain, probably left by the Canaanites of the Jordan valley who had fled into Jericho); and according to the law, this could not be done till the 16th day of the month, after the first fruits had been presented to the Lord in the second day of the Passover (Lev. xxiii. 11). On "the self-same day," not only did the eating of the new corn of the land commence, but thenceforward "the children of Israel had manna no more." They no longer needed this "angels' food," but "they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan" (Ps. lxxviii. 23). It was most natural therefore that the Hebrews should deposit in the Ark a golden pot filled with manna as a perpetual memorial of the grace of God in the wilderness (Exod. xvi. 32).

23. THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO (Josh. v. 13-15 ; vi. 1-21). It was part of Joshua's plan, as we have seen, to capture this important city, which was the capital of the valley of the Jordan and the key of Western Palestine. The Hebrews could not advance into the country at all till Jericho was taken; for their rear would have been dangerously exposed. Perhaps it was while Joshua was secretly reconnoitring the city, sheltered from observation by the palm-groves that bordered it, that a mysterious personage appeared to him in the guise of a heavenly warrior, with a drawn sword in his hand, calling himself "the Prince of the host of Jehovah," that is, of the angelic host. It is difficult to decide whether this was an angel, or, as many of the best authorities believe, the Son of God himself, thus visiting Joshua as He had visited the Patriarchs, "and temporarily assuming the

appearance of that nature He was destined in the fulness of time to wear." The design of this manifestation was to assure Joshua that Jericho was to be taken, not by military skill, but by Divine power. Meanwhile, the people of the doomed city had shut themselves in securely from all communication with the invaders—"none went out and none came in." They thought themselves safe behind their strong walls, and were no doubt provisioned for a siege. How was Jericho to be taken? The Hebrews had no battering-rams, or engines of assault, such as we see pictured on the monuments of Nineveh and Egypt, and it would have taken months to reduce the city by blockade. The prince of the Lord's host had given instructions that were well calculated to test the faith of the Hebrews. For seven successive days seven priests, bearing, not "rams' horns," but the curved trumpets of jubilee, and followed by the ark of the covenant, were to march in solemn procession round the city, one portion of the army preceding, another following the priests. Mark the sevens: seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days of procession, seven compassings on the seventh day. The whole action was deeply significant; for the number suggested the divine seven, being the symbol of perfection or completeness. The design of the seven days' march was evidently to try the faith of the Hebrews in the Lord's power and faithfulness, even when there seemed as yet no visible result of this strange ceremonial. Their natural impulse was to attack the city; the power of faith was shown in their submitting "to an unexplained, unintelligible, severely trying edict of inactivity," in consenting to play what might seem a ridiculous part in the eyes of their enemies. Yet it is quite possible that the silent march of the Hebrews around the walls may have seemed to the people of Jericho, already informed about the miraculous crossing of two seas, to be the prelude to some fresh and terrible manifestation of

divine power. The decisive moment came at last. The mighty shout of the Hebrew host went up to heaven; the fortress was shaken to its foundations, "the wall falling under itself," without the hand of man. The stronghold opened everywhere around to the rapid advance of the invaders who went up, each one straight forward over the walls into the city. "The men of Jericho fought against them" (Josh. xxiv. 11), but their strength was paralysed, and their numbers were far inferior to those of the invaders. There is not the least hint that the walls fell by one of the earthquakes so common in that region, and even were it so, the question would arise, how came such a convulsion of nature to be so critically timed? Nor was there any secret undermining of the walls, though such a circumstance has been imagined. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. xi. 30). The Hebrews of after days knew that the conquest was not man's but God's, that "they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them" (Ps. xliv. 1-3). The victory, therefore, was one into which no feeling of self-exaltation could enter.

24. DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO AND ITS INHABITANTS (Josh. vi. 21). "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and ass, with the edge of the sword." The city was set on fire, and its contents wholly consumed, except the gold, silver, and metallic vessels, which were consecrated to the tabernacle service. In the case of other Canaanite cities the inhabitants were destroyed, while the cattle were preserved (Josh. viii. 26; x. 28; Deut. ii. 34; iii. 6). But here everything was destroyed. The subject of the extermination of the Canaanites has been already discussed (chap. vi).

Suffice it to say here that there was a remarkable provision of the Mosaic law that when persons or property had been devoted by a solemn vow to God, they could not be redeemed by a gift to the sanctuary. They became *kerem*, "devoted" ("accursed," according to the Authorised Version). "All the dreadful things that can be possibly thought of are included in this one word." It was possible to "devote" an enemy's city, and thus Joshua pronounced Jericho to be "devoted" (v. 17). But it is significant that there is no command to put human beings under ban, except for deliberate idolatry on the part of a Hebrew or a Hebrew city (Deut. xiii. 12-17; vii. 2; Exod. xxii. 20). The banning of Canaanite cities was here also enjoined. Thus Jericho was devoted to destruction because it was a stronghold of the most demoralising idolatry.<sup>a</sup> But there was one family excepted from destruction. The two spies whom Rahab had protected were sent forward to identify her house, which abutted on the wall. We may conclude that that portion was left standing, or, as Eastern houses are often built in a quadrangular form, that one side only may have fallen. Rahab herself, and all her kindred (literally families), being gathered into her house, were saved and "left," or rather "made to rest outside the camp of Israel," because being Gentiles they were unclean, and had therefore to remain a certain time without the camp (Num. xxxi. 19). They were afterwards fully identified with the people of Israel (v. 25.)

25. THE CURSE ON JERICHO (Josh. vi. 26, 27). As the destruction of the city was to be for ever memorable, Joshua pronounced a perpetual anathema on the man who should attempt to rebuild it as a fortified place, prophesying that the laying of the foundations would be marked by the death of the

<sup>a</sup> It was the seat of the worship of Ashtoreth, the Canaanite Venus, its very name signifying "the city of the moon," the symbol of that goddess.

builder's eldest son, and its completion by the death of his youngest. The words of the curse are given in a sort of rhythmical form, as if for their better preservation. The curse does not apply to any mere builder of the city, but to the setter up of "gates and walls," to which Joshua, as a military leader, would attach much importance; for we find that it was afterwards included in the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 21), and is spoken of as an inhabited place (Judges iii. 13). The prediction had its fulfilment in the time of Ahab, five hundred years after. When Hiel, the Bethelite, "built Jericho, he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua" (1 Kings xvi. 34). The defiance of the curse has been well said to illustrate the unbelief that had fallen upon the northern kingdom in the days of Ahab.

**26. FIRST MILITARY CHECK OF THE HEBREWS AND ITS CAUSE** (Josh. vii. 1-15). The fall of Jericho was to open the way into the passes leading into central Palestine. Accordingly, Joshua "sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country." It was part of the wise strategy of Joshua to feel his way carefully as he advanced into unknown territory. Ai was a fortress of some importance, about fifteen miles from Jericho, situated at the head of the ravines running up from the valley of the Jordan, and commanding the approaches into the heart of the country. Its fall would involve the fall of Bethel. It was beside Bethaven, a place not yet identified, though evidently near to Bethel, and lying between Bethel and Michmash (1 Sam. xiii. 5; xiv. 23). Both Ai and Bethel are mentioned in connection with the history of Abraham (Gen. xii. 8), and are spoken of as inhabited cities in the time of the Captivity (Ezra ii. 28). The



spies reported Ai as a fortified place of twelve thousand inhabitants, and recommended that a force of two or three thousand men should be employed in the attack rather than inflict the toil of the ascent upon the whole army. Joshua acted upon the recommendation and despatched three thousand men. The result of the enterprise was very unexpected. The garrison of Ai sallied out, the Hebrews wavered and fled, panic-stricken, down the steep descent toward the Shebarim or stone-quarries, and thirty-six of them were slain in the "going-down," probably at the spot "where the wadies, descending from Ai, take their final plunge eastwards." The smallness of the loss implies that the battle had been brief and poorly contested by the Hebrews. It was no wonder that "the hearts of the people melted and became as water"—not from fear, but from a terrible misgiving that the Divine protection had for some cause been mysteriously withdrawn. Their gallant leader, at least, would know how a defeat so simple at the beginning of the campaign would restore the drooping courage of the Canaanites, and make them feel that the invaders were not invincible. Joshua rent his clothes, flung himself on the ground, and poured out his passionate appeal to the Lord, "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?" The answer was soon given. It was a time, not for weak lamentation, but for prompt action. Israel had sinned. That which had been laid under solemn ban was actually in the camp. "The children of Israel acted covertly in that which had been devoted" (v. 1). It was but the act of one man, but the nation was guilty. The nation is treated as a divinely constituted organic whole. A man of the tribe of Judah had taken some gold and silver and a mantle of fine Mesopotamian manufacture—literally, a mantle of Shinar—and had thus sinned against God. There was a troubler in the camp, and there

could be no victory till the sin was punished. "Neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed thing from among you" (v. 12). There is no hint that the defeat was due to the smallness of the force sent against Ai, or to any misleading information of the spies. It was due to an act of disobedience that involved a breach of the Divine covenant.

26. DISCOVERY AND PUNISHMENT OF ACHAN (Josh. vii. 16-22). A strict inquiry was to be made for the secret transgressor by the method of casting lots, though the lot is not expressly referred to. The lot was used in all sorts of doubtful or critical emergencies. It was in this case applied according to the fourfold organisation of the people into tribes, families, households, and persons, and at last fell on Achan or Achar, the son of Carmi. Joshua tenderly appealed to him to make confession, "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him." Achan confessed his guilt. He had secreted certain valuable spoil in the ground under his tent, from which it was now fetched and "poured out" before the symbol of Jehovah's presence. The action would make a profound impression upon the people. Punishment immediately followed. Achan was led up, "with all that he had," into a neighbouring valley above Gilgal, and "all Israel"—that is, by its representatives—"stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones." A heap of stones was then raised over him and "all that he had," in token of his isolation and disgrace, in solemn memory of a great crime and a great disaster. What are we to understand by the words, "with all that he had?" Were Achan's wife and children destroyed along with himself? Some suppose that they were brought to the valley merely as spectators, but not destroyed with him, because it is said that "all Israel stoned *him* with stones," and "they raised over *him*

a great heap of stones." It is thought that the expression "they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones," refers not to the children of Achan, but to his oxen and asses and sheep. It seems, however, that the members of his family perished with him. This is expressly implied in Josh. xxii. 20—"And that man perished not alone in his iniquity." Besides, his sons and his daughters are included among the gold and silver and cattle brought to the valley of Achor, and it is more probable from the analogous case provided for in Deut. xiii. 15, and the intimation that the ban would rest on all who took of the devoted spoil. It is difficult, indeed, to conceive how Achan's family could have been ignorant of his crime, for the spoil could hardly have been concealed in his tent without their knowledge. How terrible in any case this tragic end of Achan! The parent's fault involves his family in ruin. The sinner seldom suffers alone. But the scene of this tragedy—the valley of Achor—becomes henceforth "the door of hope" (Hosea ii. 15) "for the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger," and opened the way to new successes, and new gifts of mercy. The valley must have lain somewhere among the ridges which cross the plain to the south of Jericho. Its exact site is uncertain.

28. THE CAPTURE OF AI (Josh. viii. 1-29). The sin of Israel is now removed, and Joshua is assured of Divine help in the further prosecution of the campaign. A catastrophe like that of Ai occurs only once to a leader with the skill and piety of Joshua. A clever stratagem, followed up by a crushing attack, places Ai in the hands of the Hebrews. The whole district around the city is seamed with hollows and ravines. Joshua was commanded by the Lord to take the whole army with him from Gilgal or Jericho, and attack Ai by an ambuscade. But who formed the ambuscade? There is some difficulty in understanding the text. It would

seem that Joshua sent away 30,000 men by night from Jericho to Ai, to hide themselves behind the city in one of the ravines between Bethel and Ai. Yet 5000 men are afterwards spoken of as planted in ambush on the same western side of the city. Some suggest a copyist's error of 30,000 for 5000 in the third verse—a suggestion which is no doubt favoured by the undoubted difficulty of reconciling the figures in Kings and in Chronicles. Others suggest that there were two ambuscades, one of 30,000 nearer to Bethel and the other nearer to Ai, but both on the same side of Ai. Now, the fact that the men of Bethel, a city two miles distant from Ai, but hid from it by two intervening heights, took part in the pursuit of the Hebrews in their feigned retreat toward the wilderness (“And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel that went not out after Israel”), seems to suggest that Joshua provided against an attack on the side of Bethel simultaneously with his delivering his direct attack upon Ai. It is a significant fact that Bethel is represented, in Josh. xii. 16, as captured and its king slain by Joshua, yet no mention is anywhere made of the time or circumstances of the capture. The two ambuscades were rendered necessary by the fact that Joshua had to confront two enemies instead of one; for it is very improbable that a fortified city like Bethel so close to Ai would be left unreduced while Joshua pushed his way past it into Central Palestine. The ambuscades being now set, Joshua “mustered the people” (ver. 10), and marched a strong force to the north side of Ai. Then in the evening he descended from his vantage-ground on the hill into the plain, where the King of Ai prepared to attack him on the following morning with the whole of his forces. The Hebrews offered no resistance, but fled as before in the direction of the wilderness (probably the wilderness of Bethaven, Josh. xviii. 12), so as to draw their pursuers farther away from the city.

Thereupon Joshua gave a signal with his outstretched spear to the troops lying in ambush, and Ai, stripped of its armed defenders, was immediately occupied by the Hebrews, who set it on fire, as a sign to both armies that it had changed masters. Meanwhile the pursued Hebrews turned upon the men of Ai, who were taken in front and in rear and literally crushed, having "no power to flee this way or that way." The inhabitants of Ai were then put to the sword; their city became a blackened heap of stones; their king was slain, and his body hanged on a tree till sunset, and then buried beneath a rude pile of stones (Num. xxv. 4). Ai became a heap for ever.

29. THE PILGRIMAGE TO SHECHEM (Josh. vii. 30-35). The interior of the country being now open to his arms, Joshua took advantage of the Canaanite panic to carry out a work of an essentially religious character, without a parallel in the history of any other nation. The Lord had commanded the tribes through Moses to assemble as soon as practicable at Shechem, in the centre of the country, to renew their allegiance to Him, and to hear the conditions on which they were henceforth to hold the land (Deut. xxvii. 4). Accordingly, all the people, including women and children, as well as strangers of other races, who had come with them out of Egypt, marched from Gilgal to the memorable valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, a distance of thirty miles. Some suppose that this pilgrimage, which would occupy, at least, three days, took place at a later period, after the land had been fully conquered, as it would have been a perilous enterprise while the country still swarmed with enemies. But there is no just reason for this supposition, as a journey of thirty miles was not an impossible feat, and the terror of the Canaanites made it safe and practicable. <sup>a</sup> However hazardous it was, it was a

<sup>a</sup> It is contended that the passage recording this pilgrimage does not stand in its proper context. Most of the MSS. of the Septuagint

pure act of faith on Joshua's part, for he resolved to anticipate the conquest that would yet place the whole land in his possession, by marching to a central point in the land, where the law would be formally established as the future directory of the new possessors. Shechem was "the most beautiful, perhaps it might be said, the only very beautiful spot in Central Palestine." It was a sacred spot in Hebrew history. Here Abraham rested on his journey from Chaldea, and erected his first altar to the Lord (Gen. xii. 6, 7). Here Jacob settled on his return from the same Eastern country, digging a well which was still before the eyes of the Hebrews, and buying a field from the children of Hamor, the father of Shechem, where they were soon to bury the body of Joseph, according to his dying injunctions (Gen. xxxiii. 19 ; Josh. xxiv. 32). It was thenceforth to become the first national burying-place of the Hebrews. It afterwards became the first capital of Palestine, the seat of the great national assemblies ; and even after Jerusalem became the capital, every new reign was inaugurated at Shechem (1 Kings xii. 1). The city lay in a valley between two mountains. This valley running north and south, with a width of from a quarter to half a mile, is hemmed in between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, the summits of which are two miles apart ; Ebal, desolate and barren, on the north side, rising to a height of 2990 feet above the sea, and Gerizim, picturesque and fruitful, on the south side, towering aloft to a height of 2828 feet, and studded with caves at its foot. This was the scene of one of the most remarkable incidents in the history of Israel.

**30. THE BLESSING AND THE CURSING** (Josh. viii. 30-35 ; Deut. xxvii., xxviii.). The account

places it after ix. 2, and there are many variations, not only in the text of the Septuagint, but in the renderings of the Hebrew text. Some would place the narrative at the end of chap. xi., and find in the scenes of Ebal and Gerizim a suitable climax to the completed conquest of Palestine.

of the solemnity at Shechem is very brief, and presupposes, as we have seen, an acquaintance with the Mosaic instructions in Deuteronomy. It was to consist of three parts. First, there was to be an altar erected on Mount Ebal—an altar of unhewn stones, “as though to intimate that all should be natural and spontaneous in the worship of God, and that as little of human devising should be introduced as possible”—and sacrifices were to be offered symbolic of the solemn dedication of the people to the Lord. “Joshua’s first building is an altar not a fortress.” Secondly, stone pillars were set up covered with a cement of lime, on the surface of which was to be inscribed “the copy of the law of Moses.” What is to be understood by this writing? It was not the decalogue, which is only a summary of the obligations contained in the law, nor the whole book of Deuteronomy, which contains much more than laws, nor the blessings and cursings recorded in the text, which supply rather the motives than the rules of obedience, but all the laws given by God to Moses—that is, the strictly legislative part—which the Jews estimate at six hundred and thirteen in number. It was both possible and customary to engrave upon walls the most extensive pieces of writing. The inscription would remain uneffaced for centuries in the dry climate of the East, as we know by the Sinaitic inscriptions, and by the inscriptions in Egypt, which remain after several thousands of years as distinct as when they were first written. Thirdly, the priests with the ark occupied the valley between Ebal and Gerizim, surrounded by the elders, officers, and judges. The tribes that sprang from the wives of Jacob at the same time took their stand no doubt on Mount Gerizim, and those descended from the handmaids of Leah and Rachel, together with Reubenites, were posted on Mount Ebal (cf. Deut. xxvii. 12, 13). The law, as given by Moses was then read aloud to the vast multitude,

the tribes doubtless responding with their Amens, as had been ordained by Moses (Deut. xxvii, 26). The words of the Levites would be distinctly heard by the vast multitudes. The acoustic properties of the valley have been tested in modern times. A recent traveller says that two of his party stationed themselves on opposite sides, and recited the commandments antiphonally with perfect ease. The whole scene was a symbolical setting up of the law as the rule of life to the redeemed Hebrews in Palestine. "Such a scene transacted twelve hundred years before the first Punic war, and a thousand years before Socrates, is unique in the history of the world ; for when did any nation pledge itself to a high religious life as a recognised condition of prosperity?" The Hebrew commonwealth was essentially a theocracy, and its subjection to the Divine will was to be the secret of its order and greatness.

#### QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *Give a geographical account of the river Jordan, and mark its influence upon the destinies of Israel.*
  2. *How do we reconcile the conduct of Rahab with the praise of her faith in the New Testament ?*
  3. *Explain the meaning of the suspension of circumcision in the wilderness.*
  4. *What is meant by the act of devoting a person or a thing to God ?*
  5. *Explain the principle of the Divine government involved in the disaster at Ai.*
  6. *Explain the circumstances and meaning of the pilgrimage to Shechem.*
-



## CHAPTER VII.

## SECOND STAGE OF THE CONQUEST.

31. THE GIBEONITE COMMUNITY (Josh. ix. 3-27). An incident took place shortly after the pilgrimage to Shechem which gave Joshua a stronger hold upon Central Palestine. There were four Hivite cities, lying at a short distance from each other, west of Ai, and apparently joined in a sort of republican league governed by elders, for there is no mention made of a king over them. They are said to be "of the remnant of the Amorites" (2 Sam. xxi. 2), but the name "Amorites" is here used as a designation for the whole Canaanite people. Gibeon (now identified with El-jib), was the metropolis of this community, and was greater than Ai. It was equal, indeed, in size and importance to the capitals of kingdoms, for it was as "one of the royal cities" (Josh. x. 2). It lay, as its name imports, on the top of a hill, in fact on the top of two of the rounded hills in this neighbourhood, about five miles north-west of Jerusalem. The three other cities of the league were Beeroth, Chephirah, and Kirjathjearim. Beeroth ("wells,") now *El-birah*, was ten miles north of Jerusalem, between Jerusalem and Bethel. It is mentioned along with other Benjamite cities whose inhabitants returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (Ezra ii. 25 ; Neh. vii. 29). Chephirah, now *Kefir*, also known in the times after the captivity, was eleven miles from Jerusalem and four from Kirjathjearim. It was a Benjamite city (Josh. xviii. 26). Kirjath-jearim — "the city of woods" — deriving its name from its plantations of olives and figs, as its modern name Kirjath-enab does from its vineyards, was somewhat farther to the west than the other three towns. It was a frontier town of Judah-Benjamin, and at a later period was the place where the

ark of the covenant abode for twenty years. Thus David afterwards found "the ark in the fields of the wood" (Ps. cxxxii. 6). It still possesses thick woods. The position of these four towns was important in a strategic point of view. They held the summit of the great pass of Beth-horon (immediately opposite the opening of the pass of Ai), which has always been the great route to the coast and the south; so that the power which held the passes could easily cut off the inhabitants of these places from all communication with the north. In fact, if Joshua obtained a hold upon the Gibeonite territory he drove still further into Central Palestine the wedge that was destined to separate the north from the south. The noise of his remarkable exploits at Ai and Jericho happily opened the way for him into these parts without the alternative of a battle.

**32. THE STRATAGEM OF THE GIBEONITES AND ITS SUCCESS** (Josh. ix. 3-27). The Gibeonites were a brave people (Josh. x. 2), but they understood the power of the Hebrews. At the very time that the kings of the south, headed by the King of Jerusalem, were preparing to resist the advance of Joshua (Josh. ix. 1), the Gibeonites sought their own safety by a clever stratagem. They sent an embassy to Joshua, or "they went and travelled as ambassadors," as if they had come from a far country. They loaded their asses with old provision-bags and mended water-skins, carried dried and mouldy bread, and clothed themselves with old garments. Thus disguised they approached the camp at Gilgal, and declared to Joshua that they had come from a far country, and having heard of the conquest of the eastern side of Jordan, they desired to make a league with a people who seemed to be so conspicuously under Divine protection. They artfully omitted all reference to the later conquests of Ai and Jericho. The Hebrews seem at first to have suspected that they were Canaanites, for they said, "Peradventure

ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you ?” The Gibeonites persisted in their story, and told falsehood upon falsehood to support its plausibility. Joshua was without suspicion, and never thought of asking counsel of God (ver. 14), but “the men took of their victuals”—not, as some think, to test the truth of the Gibeonite story, but to pledge themselves after the Eastern manner to peace and friendship. The princes of the congregation ratified the engagement. The deception was quickly discovered on the Hebrews marching upon the Hivite cities. The question now was, Will the Hebrews stand by their treaty? The people murmured against the action of the princes. They probably argued that the princes were not bound to respect an engagement obtained by fraud. But if the princes were blameworthy for accepting the Gibeonite story without asking counsel of God, they were not at liberty to take advantage of their own carelessness and to repudiate their obligation. If their oath had bound them to a thing essentially wrong, they might have used the fraud of the Gibeonites as an argument for setting it aside. The princes, however, manifested an honourable strength of moral principle. That they were bound to observe their engagement appears from the fact that there was a famine in David’s time for three years because Saul had slain the Gibeonites (2 Sam. xxi. 1-10). The duty of the princes, under all the circumstances of the case, was to devise some method of respecting at once their oath and God’s purposes ; and this was done by the decree that the Gibeonites should serve the Hebrews in all after ages in the more menial offices of the tabernacle. They were condemned to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, not to individual Hebrews, but to the congregation of Israel. The oath was accordingly kept. Weighty results followed. Gibeon became afterwards an important ecclesiastical centre. It was one of the Levitical cities, and there the tabernacle was

set up for many years during the reigns of David and Solomon, the ark of the covenant being at Jerusalem (1 Chron. xvi. 39, 40; 2 Chron. i. 2, 4). This compact with Gibeon determined the future resting of the ark at Kirjath-jearim. This threw the centre of the national life southward, and favoured the supremacy of Judah, and the choice of Jerusalem as the capital. It does not appear that the Gibeonites ever betrayed their trust or seduced the Hebrews into idolatry.

33. THE CONFEDERACY OF SOUTHERN CANAAN (Josh. ix. 1; x. 1-6). The kings of Southern Palestine soon discovered that through the surrender of the Gibeonites, the approaches to their territory were already in the hands of the enemy. The invaders had, in fact, advanced into the very heart of the country. The kings therefore resolved not only to punish the treachery of the Gibeonites, but by retaking Gibeon to crush Joshua at a point where a defeat would be fatal to his plans. Perhaps they had somewhat recovered from their panic in consequence of the Hebrew repulse before Ai. The leader of the confederacy was Adoni-Zedek, King of Jerusalem. This name was probably the official title of the Jebusite kings, as Pharaoh was that of the kings of Egypt. The change from Melchizedek to Adoni-Zedek marks, perhaps, a change of dynasty. Jerusalem was sometimes called after its original inhabitants, Jebus (Judges xix. 10, 11), also, probably, Salem (Gen. xiv. 18), once "the city of Judah" (1 Chron. xxv. 28), and finally Jerusalem. It stands eighteen miles from the Jordan, and thirty-two from the Mediterranean Sea. Its situation, like its history, is very remarkable. It does not stand, like so many other cities, on the summit of one of the many hills of Judea, but at a height of above 2400 feet above the sea-level, on the edge of one of the highest table-lands of the country, the ascent being gradual from every side but the south, from which it appears "a mountain city enthroned

on a mountain fortress." Then the city itself stands separated by deep ravines from the rocky plateau on which it stands, "rising like the walls of a fortress out of its ditches." It was after the conquest in possession of the Benjamites (Josh. xviii. 28), but being on the frontier of Judah, the lower part of it was early captured by this warlike tribe, the upper town remaining in the hands of the Jebusites till David drove them out, and probably gave it the name of Jerusalem. It was natural, therefore, that the king of a place, so central and so impregnable, should be at the head of the chieftains of the south. Another king was Hoham, King of Hebron. This place, twenty miles south of Jerusalem, was one of the most ancient cities of the world, founded seven years before Zoan in Egypt (Num. xiii. 22). It stands "in the hill country of Judea," about 3000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean, and commands a splendid view of the Holy Land. It first appears in the possession of Mamre the Amorite (Gen. xiii. 18). It afterwards became the possession of the Hittites (Gen. xxiii.), and finally the Canaanites or lowlanders held it (Judges i. 10.) It was the burying-place of Abraham and Sarah, and ultimately became the inheritance of Caleb. Hebron was formidable from the gigantic stature of its inhabitants (Num. xiii. 33), and from the number of its daughter cities (Josh. x. 37). Its original name was Kirjath-arba. Another king was Piram, King of Jarmuth. This place (now called Yarmuk) was sixteen miles south-west of Jerusalem. There are ancient walls and cisterns still seen on the spot. Another king was Japhia, King of Lachish. This place was fifteen miles nearly south of Jarmuth. It was in the lowlands of Judah, was well fortified, and endured a siege by Sennacherib (Isa. xxxvi. 2.) The other king was Debir, King of Eglon, which was ten miles east of Lachish, on the Gaza road. It is so often mentioned with Lachish, that it must have been near it.

All these five cities were within the tribe of Judah, and as they were comparatively near to each other, it was possible for Adoni-Zedek to communicate with each of his allies in the course of a few hours. These were the five kings who hurried up the hill country with their armies, and laid siege to Gibeon. The Gibeonites instantly sent word to Joshua at Gilgal, saying, "Slack not thy hand to help us"—for the crisis was sudden and imminent.

34. THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON (Josh. x. 7-15). Everything depended on the suddenness of the blow that was to shatter the confederacy in pieces. Joshua's rapid movements showed his skilful generalship. He marched through the night with a powerful army from Gilgal, and when the sun rose over Gibeon, he had his troops in array along the open ground at the foot of the hill where the kings were already encamped. The battle of Beth-horon was the result. It was one of the decisive battles of the world, "like the battle of the Milvian Bridge, which involved the fall of Paganism, or the battle of Poitiers, which sealed the fate of Arianism, or like the battle of Lutzen, which determined the balance of power between Romanism and Protestantism in Germany." This battle was, in a military sense, the most important in which the Hebrews had yet been engaged, for it was the first conflict in the open field with enemies who had great skill and resources in war. "But the Lord discomfited them, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah and Makkedah." Ten miles from Gibeon was the higher Beth-horon—"the house of the cavern"—which was separated from the lower Beth-horon farther west by a pass called the ascent and the descent of Beth-horon, leading from the plain of Gibeon over to and down the plain on the western side. The summit of the pass was crowned by the village of Beth-horon, which com-

manded a view of the valley of Ajalon, and of Jaffa on the sea-coast. The road through this pass, at once rocky and difficult, has a historic interest. By it the Philistines were in Saul's days to invade Israel; by it Judas Maccabeus was to conquer the Syrian general, Nicanor; by it Paul was to pass as a prisoner by night on his way to Cæsarea. This was the pass toward which the Canaanites were now rushing in headlong flight. The first stage in their flight was up the steep ascent to the pass; the second was their descent from the pass into the plain; the third was their pursuit along the plain till they were utterly routed. Joshua pursued them through all the day. But just as they were rushing over the pass, a fearful storm broke over them, for "the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they which the children of Israel slew with the sword." The victory was therefore due more to God's favour than to Hebrew valour. Some think these stones were meteoric, but the Hebrew text, the Septuagint, and Josephus decide in favour of a hailstorm. History tells of hailstorms which have been most destructive to life. At the lower end of the pass were the two villages of Azekah and Makkedah, where the five kings found refuge in a cave. Azekah was near Shochoh, and between the two places where the Philistines were encamped on the famous day of Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 1). It was fortified by Rehoboam, besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, and was inhabited after the captivity. Makkedah was one of the lowland cities of Judah (Josh. xv. 41).

**35. THE LENGTHENING OF DAYLIGHT TO THE VICTORS** (Josh. x. 12-15). The crisis of the battle was now at hand. The sun was still high—"in the midst of heaven"—but the wild hailstorm may have darkened the prospect toward the west, whither the fugitive Canaanites were hastening for

refuge to their fortified cities ; when Joshua, seeing that the pursuit was likely to be a long one, prayed that the sun and moon should stay "until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." That prayer of faith which he poured forth, as he stood on the lofty eminence above Gibeon, has been copied into the text from the Book of Jasher, which was apparently a collection of odes in praise of the heroes of Israel.<sup>a</sup> The quotation evidently begins with the twelfth verse, and ends with the close of the fifteenth, which says that "Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp at Gilgal." Yet we know that he did not return to Gilgal immediately after the battle of Gibeon. The exact time of his return is marked in the purely historical narrative at verse 43. The question is, what conception are we to form of the marvellous transaction recorded in this part of the Book of Joshua?<sup>b</sup> Some suppose that Joshua merely prayed that the sun and moon might not set till his work was done, just as Agamemnon prays that the sun may not go down till he has sacked Troy. The account of the early victory at Gibeon is said to be interrupted at the eleventh verse (which speaks of the miraculous fall of hailstones), in order to insert (in verses 12-15) a highly figurative description of the victory taken from the Book of Jasher. According to this view, Joshua merely prays that the day may not be brought to a close till a complete victory has been gained, and the words are held to be poetical terms, like the statement of Deborah that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera," or the apostrophe of Isaiah, "O that thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would flow down at thy presence !" Others hold

<sup>a</sup> The Book of Jasher is also referred to in 2 Sam. i. 18.

<sup>b</sup> The literal translation of the passage is, "Sun, be silent upon Gibeon, and moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun was still and the moon stood, until a nation was avenged of its enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jasher? And so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down as a perfect day."



that the sun and moon literally stood still in the heavens for a whole day, in order that the victory of Joshua might be completed. It is argued by the supporters of this literal view that there was ample reason for such a display of Divine power in connection with a thing that was to have vast consequences in the whole history of the world, and that the Creator of the world "could have arrested the natural consequences of such a suspension of Nature's ordinary working as He could suspend that working itself." Others believe there was a miraculous lengthening of the day, but confess their inability to explain how it came to pass that the daylight might be continued long enough to allow him to complete his victory. If what Joshua prayed for was that the light might be continued long enough to allow him to complete his victory, his prayer might have been answered by some extraordinary prolongation of the sun's light or the sun's visibility, analogous to the visibility which is given by refraction and reflection to the sun's disc long after he has sunk below the horizon. "To the apprehension of the Israelites, this would have all the effect of staying the career of the sun, and to ours of arresting the earth's revolution on its axis ; and this is all that the sacred text requires, all that Joshua required, and all that we need require."

36. THE COMPLETE CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN PALESTINE (Josh. x. 28-43). The pursuit of the fugitives was continued in the light of the lengthened day. On his return to Makkedah, Joshua brought forth the five kings out of the cave to which they had fled for shelter, and slew them with his own hand. Their bodies were then buried in the cave. The victory of Beth-horon did not stand alone. It was the beginning of a vigorous campaign, lasting perhaps weeks or months, during which the Hebrews overran and conquered the whole south of Palestine. Many of the Canaanites, as we have

seen, had found refuge in the fortified cities, and might possibly rally for some future attack upon their invaders. Accordingly, city after city was stormed and the inhabitants slain. Six of these cities are expressly named — Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir. Several of them were afterwards given to the Levites. Libnah belonged to the maritime lowlands of Palestine. It became a Levitical city. Lachish was not taken so easily as the other cities. It was taken “on the second day.” We can therefore well understand why Sennacherib had to raise the siege of Lachish (2 Kings xix. 8), and why it successfully resisted Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxxiv. 7). This is an interesting coincidence. Joshua also smote Horam, King of Gezer, who came up to help Lachish, but it is nowhere said that he took Gezer, because it lay too far northward of his present line of operations. Gezer was on the south border of the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. xvi. 3). Its inhabitants were not driven out (Josh. xvi. 10). It was a Levitical city (Josh. xxi. 21), but the Canaanites seem to have lived on with the Levites. It is now known by its old name as Tell-el-Jezer. Eglon is now Ajlan, “a low mound of building-stones one hour east of Lachish,” on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. Joshua next went up from the plain to Hebron, which stands in the hill-country, and destroyed it with its inhabitants. The King of Hebron here spoken of was evidently a successor of the king hanged at Makkedah: There is nothing in the history inconsistent with the fact stated subsequently that “Joshua cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah” (Josh. xi. 21). He extirpated the inhabitants of all captured cities; but those who may have escaped, together with other natives, lurking for a while in the mountain fastnesses, returned while Joshua was absent in the north, and repossessed

several of the conquered cities. He then turned south to Debir, a place of some importance, for it alone, along with Hebron, had cities dependent on it. Joshua took this city, which was afterwards assigned to the priests (Josh. xxi. 15). Thus ended the southern campaign, of which we have a detailed survey in Josh. x. 40-43. The Lord God of Israel had indeed "fought for Israel." The strength of Israel lay in faith and prayer, for the Lord is always true to those who are true to their high calling.

#### QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *What was the immediate cause of the great southern confederacy against Joshua?*
2. *Explain the military, political, and ecclesiastical effects of the surrender of the Gibeonites.*
3. *Mark the three stages of the battle of Beth-horon.*
4. *Explain the different theories suggested to account for the sun and moon standing still.*
5. *How far did the pursuit of Joshua go beyond the territories of the southern kings?*

---

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### THIRD STAGE OF THE CONQUEST.

37. **THE NORTHERN CONFEDERACY** (Josh. xi. 1-15). The scene of the conquest now changes to the north. Joshua had hardly returned to the camp at Gilgal, when he heard that a powerful confederacy had been formed in the north under the direction of Jabin, King of Hazor. This king seems to have held in the north the influential position held by Adoni-Zedek in the south. The name Jabin, which means "wise," was given to all the kings of Hazor,

like Pharaoh in Egypt, and Cæsar in the Roman Empire. Hazor — “the fort” — was a powerful stronghold, situated in the mountains above the waters of Merom. It was “head of all the kingdoms” in that part of Palestine (ver. 10), and was afterwards assigned to the tribe of Naphtali (Josh. xix. 36). From this northern fortress King Jabin sent out invitations for a general rising, not only to all the petty kings around him, but to all the broken remnants of the defeated Canaanites over the whole country. His first call was naturally to Jobab, King of Madon, to the King of Shimron, and to the King of Achshaph, evidently places in the neighbourhood of Hazor. The message also went to “the kings on the north of the mountains,” or, rather, to “the kings to the northward in the mountain district”—not the Lebanon mountains, but the mountains of Galilee called “Mount Naphtali” (Josh. xx. 7.) It also went to “the plains south of Cinneroth” (rather, the Arabah, the northern portion of the Ghor or depressed tract, which extends south of the town of Cinneroth, in the tribe of Naphtali, giving its earliest name to the lake of Galilee, or Sea of Tiberias, Num. xxxiv. 11). It went also to “the valley,” that is, the level plain, or *Shephelah*, extending along the sea from Carmel southwards, and “to the borders of Dor on the west” (rather, “the highlands of Dor”), on the sea-coast south of Carmel, and seven miles north of Cæsarea. This Dor was one of the Phœnician commercial cities, with a fine harbour and an abundant supply on its shores of the shell-fish which made the famous Tyrian purple. Thus the confederacy was the most extensive and the most formidable that Joshua had yet to encounter. It was a grand effort to crush the invaders. “It was a final and supreme effort like that of our forefathers in Northumberland after the defeat of Senlac.”

38. THE BATTLE OF MEROM (Josh. xi. 6-8).  
The rendezvous of the vast host was on the plain

south-west of Lake Merom (the modern El-huleh), the highest of the inland lakes of Palestine, five miles in breadth, and fifteen in length. Here the confederates were encamped on the table-land "above the waters of Merom." The battle-field was an ancient one. It was here that Abraham routed the forces of Chedor-laomer and his allies. It was now to be the scene of a more terrible conflict. Joshua was nerved for it by the encouraging assurance of the Lord—"Be not afraid of them." The enemy was provided with the best appliances of war known to that age. Horses and chariots now for the first time appear in Canaanite warfare—the horse, indeed, for the first time in Jewish history—and probably Jabin selected the field of battle along the shores of Merom because it would allow full play to his chariots and cavalry. "To-morrow about this time will I deliver them up slain <sup>a</sup> before Israel." Several days would be occupied by the march from Gilgal, and it must have been when he was within a day's march of the enemy that he received this encouraging assurance. He received at the same time an express injunction to burn the chariots and hough the horses of the Canaanites, that they might not henceforth be employed in war either by friend or enemy. Joshua exercised his usual strategy in this battle. As before at Gibeon, he takes the enemy by surprise, suddenly emerging from one or more of the mountain passes of Upper Galilee. He drops upon them like a thunderbolt (so the Hebrew has it), "on the mountain slopes" (as the Greek version adds), where the chariots and horses would have no place for manœuvring, and, following up the attack upon the astonished and unwieldy host, he drove them before him in helpless disorder. No details of the battle are given. It was a most decided victory for the Hebrews, and gave a final death-blow to the hopes of the ancient races of Palestine. "The Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote

<sup>a</sup> Or, "wounded." (Septuagint and Vulgate.)

them and chased them." The Canaanites fled from the battlefield in three different directions, probably according to the places from which they came. One party sought refuge along the north-western road over the mountains till they reached "Great Sidon," the metropolis of Phœnicia, thirty miles distant, on the Mediterranean Sea. Sidon would probably be friendly in its reception. Another party of fugitives took the road west and south-west to Misrephoth-maim, not far from Sidon, and probably connected with it (Josh. xiii. 6). The word signifies "burnings of waters," and has been variously interpreted to refer to hot springs, to salt-pits, or to glass-houses, of which there were several in the neighbourhood of Sidon. Some think the place is identical with "Zarephath that belongeth to Sidon" (1 Kings xvii. 9), the Sarepta of the New Testament. A third party fled eastward unto "the valley of Mispah," at the foot of Hermon. "And they smote them until they left them none remaining." Joshua returned from the pursuit to burn Hazor to the ground, partly because of its great importance as a stronghold, partly because he may have heard of the recapture of the fortified cities of the south by the Anakims (verses 13, 21). He did not think it necessary to burn the smaller cities, which were left "standing each on its own hill," the hill being the ordinary site for cities in Palestine. Hazor was afterwards rebuilt by the Canaanites (Judges iv. 2), but not in the days of Joshua. Jabin, the king, was put to death by the sword.

**39. EXTERMINATION OF THE ANAKIMS** (Josh. xi. 21, 22). During the closing days of the conquest—the exact time not being specified—Joshua destroyed the remarkable race of giants who dwelt in the hill country of Judah. It was appropriate that Joshua and Caleb, the two faithful spies who were not intimidated by the giants of other days, should be employed in this arduous service. The Anakims

were no doubt a hill tribe of the Amorites. Their progenitor was Arba, "the father of Anak" (Josh. xv. 13), from whom the city of Hebron took its name of Kirjath-arba. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai were children of Anak, though some think these names indicate not individual warriors, but chiefs of tribes. Og, King of Bashan, was of "the remnant of the giants" (Deut. iii. 11). Some suppose that these giants were "a tribe of Cushite wanderers from Babel, and of the same race as the Philistines, the Phœnicians, and the Egyptian shepherd-kings, representing one or more families of Amorite descent, distinguished for their lofty stature and physical powers." We know that the Anakims had their chief settlements in the mountains about Hebron. Anab was one of their cities south of Hebron, and still retains its ancient name. It may have been a daughter-city of Debir. "Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities." A remnant, however, found refuge in the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, where they were still to be found in the days of David (1 Sam. xvii. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 18-22).

40. GENERAL RETROSPECT OF THE CONQUEST. The duration of Joshua's wars is loosely represented as "many days" (Josh. xi. 18). The series of decisive battles may not have occupied a long time, but years may have been spent in the capture of individual cities. It is possible to ascertain the full period with some degree of definiteness. Caleb tells us that he was forty years old when he was sent from Kadesh-Barnea as one of the spies, and he was eighty-five years old when he claimed Hebron from Joshua (Josh. xiv. 7, 10). The conquest was then finished. It would follow from these two facts that, as the mission of the spies took place in the second year after the exodus (Num. xiii. 20), and the wanderings occupied forty years, that Caleb was thirty-eight years of age when he left Egypt, and seventy-eight when he crossed the Jordan. Thus there is a period of

seven years left for the campaigns of Joshua, and we cannot be far astray in assigning the best part of this space to the conquest. "And the land rested from war" (xi. 23). This means that the Hebrews ceased to make war unitedly upon the Canaanites, whose resistance was for the time completely broken down. But as there was yet much land to be possessed, it was left to the individual tribes, as soon as they received their allotted inheritances, to clear it of its ancient possessors. It was no part of the commission of Joshua to exterminate the Canaanites at once (Deut. vii. 22; Exod. xxiii. 29, 30); for this would have been to throw the land out of cultivation, and to expose the Hebrews to the ravages of wild beasts. They were to be extirpated by degrees through the valour of the individual tribes. The Book of Joshua gives us a brief summary of the conquests on the two sides of the Jordan, prefacing its account by the remark that "it was of the Lord to harden the hearts of the Canaanites that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses." Where such hardening is anywhere spoken of in Scripture, it is represented as a judgment on those who oppose the Divine will. It does not go before sin; but it follows after it, as one of its dreadful consequences. "God never hardens a man's heart except through his own abuse of providential actions and spiritual influences, which are kindly and wholesome in themselves, and prove themselves so to those who use them aright" (Matt. xiii. 11-15). This was true of Pharaoh (Exod. xiv. 4), and it was eminently true of the Canaanites, whose debasing vices had a special tendency to make them insensible to all moral checks. The history gives us first an account of the conquests of Moses on the east of the Jordan; then it describes the kings and the country conquered by Joshua on the west of the river. It is remarkable



that a small country of the size of Wales should contain so many kings, and that its divisions should not have exposed it to the risk of falling under the sway of Og or Sihon, who possessed so much larger dominions across the river. But it was this conscious weakness in their political position that led them to form leagues for their protection, under Hazor in the north, and Adoni-Zedek in the south; while the Philistines formed their five cities into a league of common defence. It is also noticeable that many more kings are mentioned than occur in the history of the conquest; the reason probably being that some of them may have been under-kings, subject to the more important kings in their own neighbourhood. Several of the cities had daughter-cities dependent upon them. Though Joshua "took the whole land," that is, broke down all resistance and established a complete military ascendancy over Palestine, there were many districts neither totally nor finally subdued. "There was much land yet to be possessed." The Canaanites still held strong fortresses in Gezer, Jerusalem, and Bethshean. The history is careful to describe the limits of the unconquered territory, first in the south and then in the north. The powerful league of the Philistines is first noticed. Here, indeed, they first become prominent in history. They had changed in four hundred years from a pastoral to a settled nation, and established themselves firmly in the south-west of the country, to which they succeeded eventually in giving their name. The Philistines do not appear in the list of the nations to be extirpated by the Hebrews, but their territories were nevertheless assigned to the tribe of Judah (Josh. xii. 12). The Avims or Avites belonged to the early Palestine tribes who dwelt in the south of the western lowland, and were conquered by the Philistines, who drove them northward, and occupied their territory. The words "from the south" should be "in the south," and ought to be read with the verse pre-

ceding as indicating the southern limit of the still unsubdued territory of Palestine. The northern part is next described as "all the land of the Canaanites," that is, the Phœnicians on the coast, and "Meara that is beside the Sidonians" (rather, "in the direction of the Sidonians"). The next limit is "unto Aphek"—a city in the extreme north of Asher. The next is "to the borders of the Amorites," as far as the extreme northern borders of the former kingdom of Og, near Mount Hermon; and "the land of the Giblites" ("the land of the people of Gebal," referred to in Ps. lxxxiii. 7), a maritime town of Phœnicia. Then the next limit is "all Lebanon toward the sun-rising," that is, unto Lebanon, "from Baalgad under Mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath," which would be the extreme northern boundary-point of Palestine visited by the spies (Num. xiii. 21), and to which the kingdom of David and Solomon once extended (2 Sam. viii. 3-12; 1 Chron. xiii. 5; xviii. 3; 2 Chron. viii. 3, 4). In addition to the territory already described as still unconquered, there remained for subjugation "all the inhabitants of the hill-country from Lebanon to Mizrephoth-maim" (Zarephath or Sarepta), "and all the Sidonians." A portion of the Sidonian territory was taken, but Sidon maintained its independence (Judg. i. 31, 32). Thus, then, there still remained a considerable portion of territory to be subdued by the Hebrews.

#### QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *Describe the nature and extent of the northern confederacy.*
2. *What military resources made it formidable to the Hebrews?*
3. *What was the nature of Joshua's strategy at the battle of Merom?*
4. *What was the duration of Joshua's wars?*

5. *How are we to understand the phrase, "Joshua took the whole land," consistently with the fact that there was much unconquered territory?*

6. *Describe the cities that were most intimately connected with Baal-worship.*

---

## CHAPTER IX.

### DIVISION OF THE LAND.

41. **PRINCIPLES OF THE DIVISION.** It has been remarked that there have always been two principles adopted by conquerors in the division of new territory. One is exemplified in the Norman conquest of England, and in the conquests of modern times, by which territory is appropriated according to the power or will of the conqueror. The other is exemplified in the conquests of Greece and Rome, where the state undertook to assign the different portions of the conquered territory. Both of these principles were adopted in the conquest of Palestine. The first is seen in the conquests of Jair and Nobah on the east of Jordan, in the Danite capture of the Phœnician Laish, and in the attack of Caleb upon Hebron; the second, in the assignment by lot of the territory of the seven tribes and a half after the two great tribes of Judah and Joseph had been provided for. The method of distribution by lot, which was not unknown to the Gentiles, was well designed to prevent complaint or misunderstanding among the tribes. It represented the Divine disposal (Prov. xvi. 33), and not "the opinion, caprice, or authority of man." It is significant to find no trace of conflicts among the different tribes respecting the division of the land, or of attempts made to disturb the arrangements. The lot, however, only determined the posi-

tion of the tribes, not the extent of their territory, which was proportioned to the size of the tribe, and was increased or diminished after the division as circumstances demanded (Josh. xvii. 4 ; xix. 9 ; Num. xxxiii. 54). We are not told how the lots were taken. Probably there were two urns, one containing the names of the tribes, and the other those of the divisions of the land, and a name was taken out at the same time from each of the urns. The casting of the lots did not take place simultaneously. After the Transjordanic tribes had been settled in their wide inheritance in accordance with the disposition made by Moses, the great tribes of Judah and Joseph were first provided for in the land of Canaan. The camp was then moved from Gilgal to Shiloh, and lots were afterwards cast for the other seven tribes. The record of the distribution of territory is contained in the latter half of the Book of Joshua, which has accordingly been well described as the geographical manual of the Holy Land, the Domesday Book of the conquest of Palestine.

42. SETTLEMENT OF REUBEN, GAD, AND THE HALF TRIBE OF MANASSEH (Josh. xiii. 7-14). Moses had already assigned the territory of these tribes, but Joshua had to fix the exact limits of each of the portions, and to put the tribes in possession. It was a valuable and charming inheritance, larger, too, than the entire domain bestowed upon the seven tribes and a half on the west of Jordan. It was sometimes called "the land of Gilead," but oftener the country "on the other side Jordan." It was the frontier-land, and therefore it was the first conquered, and the first lost by the Hebrews, in their eventful history. Reuben's lot was the smallest and most southerly of the three, stretching from the Arnon, on the south, to a point northward almost on a line with the north end of the Dead Sea, which formed its western boundary. Gad's lot lay about the centre of the Transjordanic district commencing

near Heshbon, on the south, and stretching northward to the ancient sanctuary of Mahanaim, so famous in the history of Jacob's return from Padanaram, and of David's flight from Absalom. The half-tribe of Manasseh occupied the largest extent of the land east of Jordan. Its southern boundary was Mahanaim, and its northern the foot of Lebanon. Moses had assigned to it the district it had already subdued (Num. xxxii. 39-42), so that as the western Manasseh was appointed to defend the passes of Esdraelon, the eastern Manasseh was placed to keep the passes of the Hauran. The impregnable Argob, with its sixty cities—"an ocean of basaltic rocks and boulders tossed about in the wildest confusion"—lay within the borders of this tribe. The deep rent of the Jordan valley, separating the eastern from the western tribes, had its effect upon the historic destinies of both, but most of all on the eastern tribes, who gradually gave way to the idolatries that surrounded them. Reuben's power gradually declined and shrunk into smaller dimensions in fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix.). He took no part in the great struggles of the nation, and produced no judge or prophet or hero in all his history. Gad's more brave and enterprising character is manifest in the warlike career of Jephthah, in the noble spirit of Barzillai, and in the profoundly interesting career of Elijah, the Tishbite. Manasseh's character was likewise bold and enterprising. The time came, however, when all three tribes fell into the wandering shepherd life, and ceased to have influence upon the fortunes of Israel. Their religious apostacy was complete. The retribution came at last when "the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tiglath-Pilezer king of Assyria," to carry them away into captivity (1 Chron. v. 25). Their country has been significantly described as the land of exile; for there David fled from Absalom; there Jesus, the son of David, found

refuge and retirement ; and there, in the little town of Pella, somewhere on the slopes of Gilead, the Christians found refuge when the Roman armies under Titus were laying Jerusalem in the dust.

### I. *The Tribe of Judah.*

43. THE TERRITORY OF THIS TRIBE (Josh. xv.). The first assignment of territory on the west of the Jordan, was made by Joshua to Caleb, the only other survivor of the spies of five and forty years before (Josh. xiv. 6-15). The district which this ancient worthy, who holds such an honoured place, sought for his inheritance, was Hebron, now in the possession of the Anakims, but henceforth to be the capital of the southern tribes, till the capture of Jebus in the time of David. His faithfulness, his courage, his independence, all rooted in entire devotion to the Lord, had now received their just reward. The property now assigned to him can be traced in the possession of his descendants down to the time of David (1 Sam. xxx. 14). The great tribe of Judah occupied nearly one-third of Western Palestine. It commanded the entrances from the desert on the south, as Ephraim and Benjamin guarded the entrances from the east and west, and it afterwards included Jerusalem, the future capital of the whole country. "The lion of Judah here entrenched himself to guard the southern frontier, with Simeon, Dan, and Benjamin nestled around him." The southern boundary of Judah commenced from the farthest coast of the Dead Sea eastward, then passed to the south side of the heights of Akrabbim—"the pass of scorpions," where scorpions still lie under almost every stone—then proceeded in the direction of Zin, or that part of the wilderness of Paran in which Kadesh-Barnea was situated ; and south of this point it turned westward, coming out finally at the "Torrent of Egypt," and at the Mediterranean Sea.

Its western boundary was the Mediterranean Sea; but the coast-country was afterwards assigned to the tribes of Simeon and Dan. Its eastern boundary was the length of the Dead Sea as far north as Jericho, which belonged to Benjamin, or "unto the end of Jordan," that is, to the point where it enters the Dead Sea. Its northern boundary passed from the Dead Sea where the Jordan entered it—"at the bay of the sea," that is, the embouchure of the Jordan—up to Bethhoglah—a point between Judah and Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 19), two miles west of Jordan—and thence to Betharabah, in the deep valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea (Josh. xv. 61), lying between Bethhoglah and the high lands on the west of Jordan. Then the boundary went up through the valley of Achor, which was southward of Jericho (Josh. vii. 26), northwards towards Gilgal, the place of the Hebrew encampment (Josh. iv. 19), which is thus described as "before the going up to Adummin, which is on the south side of the river"—that is, the road passing up from Jericho to Jerusalem, the scene of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Then the boundary passed to Enshemesh, supposed to be near Bethany, on the pilgrims' route to the Jordan, thence to Enrogel, below the junction of the valleys of Kedron and Hinnom, south-east of Jerusalem. Thence the borders "went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom, unto the south side of the Jebusite: the same is Jerusalem"—that is, the valley was on the south side of Jerusalem. Hinnom was probably some ancient hero who encamped or dwelt here. The valley or ravine, sometimes called Tophet, sometimes Gehenna, was the scene of abominable idol worship. Here Solomon erected an altar to Moloch (1 Kings xi. 7). Here children were offered in sacrifice (2 Kings xvi. 3; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; Jer. vii. 31). It became a place of horror and detestation, and our Lord applies the name given to the valley to the place of future tor-

ment (Matt. v. 22). Thence the border passed to Kirjath-jearim, one of the Gibeonite cities, from which it described a course westward to Mount Seir—not the Edomite Seir, but a range running south-west—thence to Bethshemesh, once dedicated to the old Phœnician worship of the Sun, about two miles from the Philistine plain. Then passing Timnath, so memorable for the exploits of Samson, it tended towards a point near Ekron, from which it passed westward to the Mediterranean Sea. The number of the cities of Judah—118 in all—implies a large territory. The tribe occupied 3000 square miles, the average length being 45 miles, and the average breadth 50 miles. The cities are grouped in four divisions, named respectively “the south” or Negeb, which was pasture-land; “the valley,” or rather the Shephelah, the garden and the granary of the tribe, lying between the Mediterranean Sea and the hill-country; “the mountains” or “the hill country,” the central possession of the tribe, containing the fenced cities, stretching between the Shephelah and the Dead Sea; and “the wilderness,” which was the sunken district bordering on the Dead Sea—“a wilderness, but no desert.”<sup>a</sup>

44. FORTUNES OF THE TRIBE. These corresponded with the extent and importance of its territory. It had no great beginnings. In the reign of the Judges it seemed to have no influence; it is not even named in the ode of Deborah; it had no part in the struggles of the nation, probably because the Jebusites were firmly planted between the mountains of Ephraim and the mountains of Judah, separating the tribe from their northern brethren.

<sup>a</sup> There is an apparent discrepancy between the numbers of the cities in the detailed lists and in the sum total as given in the Book of Joshua. Some of the names appear as two towns, though they were really one; two names may sometimes have belonged to the same city; some of the places were mere hamlets, and therefore not counted with the rest. Names may have come to be dropped out or inserted through the inadvertence of transcribers, for we cannot suppose that the inspired writer did not know how to count.



Caleb and Othniel alone in the early period threw lustre upon it, as at a later period Benjamin gave the first king to the entire country. But the sceptre ultimately passed to Judah in the hands of David, and remained in the hands of his successors with some interruptions that did not, however, break the tribal succession, till the Shiloh came. It reached its highest glory in the reigns of David and Solomon, its power in peace equalling its greatness in war ; and even after the separation of the ten tribes, it prospered in spite of its enemies, through its wide commercial communications by the Red Sea. As it had little commercial intercourse with the Phenicians, the Baal worship hardly ever found a footing in the tribe. It survived for a century the expatriation of the ten tribes, till at last its own idolatry sent it to Babylon. Through all the centuries that followed, Judah held the tribal authority till the destruction of Jerusalem. It is further memorable as the tribe that gave birth to the Saviour of the world, and gave name to the race of Jews, the most interesting and remarkable in all history.

## II. *Tribe of Joseph.*

45. THE TERRITORY OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH (Josh. xvi.). The lot of Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh was in the very centre of Palestine. The two tribes drew one lot because it was intended that their inheritances should be adjacent. They had the best part of the country—the central hills, which were pre-eminently fruitful on account of the springs of water that abounded on every side, Ephraim taking possession of the rich district north and south of Shechem, which from ancient associations and from its central position became the capital of the whole country, Manasseh holding the district immediately north of Ephraim, but cramped in its boundaries by the Canaanite fortresses which com-

manded the rich plain of Esdraelon. The blessing of Moses implied the great value of Joseph's lot (Deut. xxxiii. 13-17). "The wild bull or buffalo of the house of Joseph (Deut. xxxiii. 17) was to guard the north as the lion of Judah was to guard the south (Josh. xviii. 5). One half of the tribe of Manasseh had that post in the east of Jordan; the other half, with Ephraim, had the same in the west." The southern boundary of the two tribes, which coincided for part of its length with the northern boundary of Benjamin, was the same. It extended from the spring near Jericho, whose waters Elisha healed, upward into the hilly country around Bethel or Luz—these two places being on virtually the same foundation, like old and new Carthage—passing westward down Lower Beth-horon and on to Gezer, which probably lay between Beth-horon and Lydda, coming out on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The whole territory may be freely estimated at 55 miles from east to west, and at 70 from north to south. It was necessary to add to the inheritance of Ephraim "separate cities," or rather "single cities," within the borders of Manasseh, named in 1 Chr. vii. 29, the Manassites being afterwards recompensed at the expense of Asher and Issachar (Josh. xvii. 11). This mixing of the boundaries of three or four tribes around Ephraim may account, in part, for the cohesion of the ten tribes in opposition to Judah. Though Ephraim took precedence of Manasseh according to the prediction of Joseph (Gen. xlvi. 20), Manasseh received "the double portion," which was the privilege of the first-born. The territory of Manasseh was a block of hilly country north of Ephraim. The children of Joseph were not satisfied with the large territory assigned to them by Joshua, as they deemed themselves "a great people," and therefore entitled to more than one "lot and one portion." Perhaps they presumed upon the tribal relationship of Joshua as likely to incline him favourably

to their pretensions. Their claim was hardly warranted by facts. For the two tribes were hardly more numerous than the single tribe of Judah (Num. xxvi.), and as half of Manasseh was already provided for in the east side of Jordan, the remaining sections of the Josephite tribes could hardly be stronger than the tribes of Dan and Issachar. The reply of Joshua showed that he was superior to mere tribal partiality ; for, in a tone of subdued irony, he told them that, as they were a great people, they could cut their own way into the Canaanite country, and enlarge their borders by their own valour. We observe in the discontent of the two tribes the same temper of arrogance which was afterwards manifested to Gideon, to Jephthah, and to David (Judges viii. 1-3 ; xii. 1-7 ; 2 Sam. xx. 1-5). "National disintegration, tribal jealousies, coupled with boastfulness and unwillingness to execute the work given them of God, were only too surely foreboded in the conduct of the children of Joseph." Yet in spite of Joshua's strong incentives to courageous action, they did not drive out the Canaanites (Josh. xvi. 11-13).

46. **SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE TWO TRIBES.** Deborah, the prophetess, probably a woman of Ephraim (at least she "dwelt between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim") summoned forth the tribes like another Joan of Arc to resist the invasion of Jabin, King of Canaan. Tola, of Issachar, judged Israel in Shamir in Mount Ephraim. Gideon, a man of Manasseh, hurled back the Midianite invasion. At a later period, the Ephraimites, angry with Jephthah, the Gileadite, for not calling them to war against the Ammonites, made war upon the men of Gilead, and were defeated with a terrible loss. Samuel, the greatest and purest of all the judges, was of "Ramathaim-Zophim of Mount Ephraim." The greatness of the house of Joseph was long anterior to that of the house of Judah. "For more than five hundred years—a period equal to that which elapsed

between the Norman conquest and the wars of the Roses—Ephraim, with its two dependent tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, exercised undisputed pre-eminence. Joshua, the first conqueror, Gideon, the greatest of the judges, and Saul, the first king, belong to one or other of the three tribes. It was not till the close of the first period of Jewish history that God refused the tabernacle of Joseph and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, even the Mount Zion which he loved" (Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68). The power of Ephraim was humbled by the removal of the ark from Shiloh to Zion. Soon after the revolt of the ten tribes, the city of Samaria was erected by Omri, and selected as the capital instead of Shechem, as being more in the heart of the new kingdom, and almost on the edge of the great maritime plain. The two tribes held a conspicuous place in the apostasy which led eventually to the Babylonish captivity.

47. REMOVAL OF THE TABERNACLE TO SHILOH (Josh. xviii. 1-10). It was not possible to set up the sacred tent till the tribe, in the midst of which the Lord had intended it to stand, had received its inheritance. The two great tribes of Judah and Joseph having been settled in their wide allotments, the camp at Gilgal was broken up, and "the whole congregation of the children of Israel" removed to Shiloh, a place within the border of Ephraim, a little east of the great central route through the hill-country from north to south. Its position has been exactly described. It is "on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah" (Judg. xxi. 19). Shiloh was one of the earliest of the Hebrew sanctuaries, and was selected now partly from its central situation, for it was equally distant from north and south, and in the heart of that hill-country which was least exposed to foreign invasions during the whole of Hebrew history. It was also easy of access to the tribes east of Jordan. It was here that

lots were cast for the assignment of the territory of the remaining seven tribes, after a commission of twenty-one members, three for each tribe, had been appointed to survey the land that remained for allotment (Josh. xviii. 4-10). Yet Shiloh never became the political capital of the country. The rulers took up their abode at Shechem, twelve miles north of Shiloh, where they held their national assemblies, and where, even after Jerusalem became the capital, the kings were crowned (1 Kings xii. 1), just as for ages the kings of France were crowned at Rheims, its old capital.

### III. *Tribe of Benjamin.*

48. **TERRITORY AND HISTORY OF THE TRIBE** (Josh. xviii. 11-28). This small but warlike tribe held the important strip of land between Judah and Ephraim. It had marched beside Ephraim and Manasseh in the wilderness, and it was now settled beside them in Palestine. "Thus a group was formed in the centre of Palestine, firmly compacted, of the descendants of Rachel, cut off on the north by the broad plain of Esdraelon, and on the south by the precipitous ravines of Hinnom." It was a narrow but fruitful district on the south of its great patron tribe. Its general level was very high, being 2000 feet above the Mediterranean on one side, and 3000 feet above the Jordan valley on the other, while its ravines formed the only modes of access from the Philistine country on the one side, and the sunken valley of the Jordan on the other. It thus perfectly commanded the approaches from the east and from the west. Its territory was about twenty-six miles in length, by twelve in breadth. Two groups of cities, twenty-six in all, are found within its limits. One of these cities was Jerusalem, the future capital of Palestine. "Little Benjamin" was famous for his warlike enterprise, which was in striking contrast with the small-

ness of his numbers and territory (2 Sam. i. 22). "After thee, O Benjamin, was the favourite war-cry" (Judg. v. 14). Ephraim owed to him much of his military strength. Benjamin never forgot that he gave the first king to Israel, and Christians have a significant remembrance of a still greater Saul, in the apostle of the Gentiles. The religious history of the tribe was somewhat remarkable, for it alternatively followed the fortunes of Ephraim and Judah. The bitterest enemies of David's house—Saul, Shimei, and Sheba—were Benjamites. The tribe was identified with the house of Joseph at the beginning of the national disruption, as well as during its continuance (2 Sam. ii. 9), but a remnant followed the fortunes of Rehoboam (1 Kings xii. 21), and Judah and Benjamin are seen standing firmly together after the Babylonish captivity (Ezra i. 5 ; iv. 1 ; x. 9).

#### IV. *Tribe of Simeon.*

49. ITS TERRITORY AND HISTORY (Josh. xix. 1-9). It fell within the inheritance of Judah, which proved larger than the numbers of that tribe required. It supplied a sort of protection to Judah on the south and west against the attacks of Philistines and Arabs. Its fortunes were blended with Judah, into which it was ultimately absorbed, so as to bring about the literal fulfilment of the curse pronounced upon Simeon and Levi. "I will disperse them in Judah and scatter them in Israel" (Gen. xlix. 5-7). It shared in the honours of conquest with Judah in Philistine territory (Judg. i. 17), but it soon lost its acquisitions, and henceforth seems to have been content to live under the protection of its powerful neighbour. In the days of Hezekiah the Simeonites were still extant, and made conquests among certain Hamite tribes at Mount Seir, on the south borders of Palestine (1 Chron. iv. 24).

### V. *Tribe of Zebulun.*

50. **ITS TERRITORY AND HISTORY** (Josh. xix. 10-16). It extended from the Kishon to the Jordan, including the country round Nazareth and the hills on the north side of the plain of Esdraelon. It lay between Naphtali and Issachar, having Asher on the west, and its border seems to have approached very near the sea coast. It is difficult to trace its boundary, as the sites have not been identified, nor is there any mention of Nazareth, where our Lord spent his childhood and youth, six miles west-north-west of Mount Tabor, hid in a narrow valley. Zebulun possessed one of the fairest portions of Palestine. It enjoyed the fisheries of the Sea of Galilee and the agricultural wealth of the rich mountain valleys, while it had "the goings out" of the plain of Akka (Deut. xxxiii. 18), where it could "dwell at the shore" and "suck of the abundance of the seas" (Gen. xlix. 13). "Zebulun," said Jacob, "shall dwell at the haven of the sea, and he shall be for a haven of ships, and his border shall be unto Sidon." His territory extended near to the Mediterranean, and tradition says his people traded on the sea in purple dyes, and perhaps employed themselves in the manufacture of glass, while it extended on the east to a considerable portion of the shores of Galilee. Though this tribe was numerous, it occupied a very subordinate place in the great historical movements of the Hebrew nation. Yet twice its people bore themselves nobly in the battle of independence: once, when side by side with Naphtali "they jeoparded their lives unto death in the high places of the field" (Judges v. 18) in the battle with Sisera; and again, in David's time, when 50,000 "expert in war," with "all instruments of war," who "could keep rank" came up to the coronation of David at Hebron (1 Chr. xii. 33). The princes of Zebulun were present at the removal of the ark to

Mount Zion (Ps. lxxviii.). The only judge of the tribe was Elon, who judged Israel ten years, and the only prophet was Jonah, sent to Nineveh. The reason of its obscure position in the subsequent history of the nation was probably its proximity to Phœnicia, a great heathen power, with vast commercial relations on its borders. The temperature of religious life could not but suffer from such contiguity. But if Zebulun was obscure in the ancient history of the nation it rose into great glory in New Testament times, on account of its connection with the first beginnings of Christianity (Isa. ix. 12; Matt. iv. 15, 16).

## VI. *Tribe of Issachar.*

51. ITS TERRITORY AND HISTORY (Josh. xix. 17-23). Its boundary was determined by the territory already allotted to Zebulun and Manasseh, except on the east side, where Tabor and the Jordan bounded it. Its border reached beyond and included Jezreel. Its inheritance was in the richest land of Palestine. The plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon extended from Mount Carmel on the west to the Jordan on the east, and was twelve miles in width. On the west it narrowed into a pass, which expanded again into the bay of Acre. It was in one respect a dangerous inheritance, for the strong Canaanite city of Acre commanded it on the west, and that of Bethshan on the east, while it was dominated by the fortresses of Harosheth and Taanach on the spurs of the southern hills. The plain was 'the perennial battlefield of Palestine from that time till the present.' "Here were fought the battles of Gilboa and Megiddo, in which Saul and his son met their deaths; twice did the Egyptians invade Syria by this plain; Gideon and Barak fought their battles here; and it was the scene of Maccabæan battles." Well may it be fertile, for it has drunk the blood of the



Midianite, the Philistine, the Jew, the Roman, the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Frenchman, the Englishman, the Saracen, the Turk. The tribe of Issachar chose to dwell in tents, and took but a subordinate part in the great struggles of the nation. "But he saw that rest was good, and the land pleasant, and he bowed his neck to bear, and became a slave to tribute" (Gen. xlix. 14, 15). The blessing of Jacob rightly described him as "a strong-boned he-ass couching down between two cattle-pens or sheepfolds." Accordingly, the Issacharites paid tribute to the surrounding nations, while they surrendered to the Manassites on their border the cities of Bethshan, Taanach, and Megiddo, which they could not wrest from the Canaanites. They produced one judge, Tola, who dwelt in Shamir, in Mount Ephraim. At a later period, among those who went up to David's coronation at Hebron were "men of Issachar, who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chr. xii. 32), probably because they felt that they would be more secure from attack under the strong government of a king. Baasha, one of the bad kings of Israel, was of this tribe. It was more to its honour that many of the tribe kept the feast of unleavened bread at Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah.

## VII. *Tribe of Asher.*

52. ITS TERRITORY AND HISTORY (Josh. xix. 24-31). It possessed the fertile strip of maritime territory south of Sidon, and reaching beyond the range of Carmel. It had the rich plain of Acre: "so insignificant was the tribe to which was assigned the fortress which Napoleon called the key of Palestine." The city of Acre is celebrated for its many sieges in ancient and modern times. "It is the only city of Palestine which has acquired distinct relations with the western world of modern history." Though Asher

rejoiced in part of the richest land of Palestine, yielding the "oil" in which he was to "dip his feet," the bread which was to be "fat," and "the royal dainties" in which he was to "delight" (Gen. xlix. 20), while "under his shoes" were the iron ore of the southern slopes of Lebanon, and "the brass" of the Phœnician territory (Deut. xxxiii. 25), it had not spirit or courage to conquer its full inheritance, but was content to live among the Phœnicians in peace. "The Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites" (Judges i. 32). In fact, they settled down side by side with the Phœnicians under statutes mutually agreed to. In the struggle against Sisera, Asher selfishly sought his own interests, "continuing on the sea-shore, and abiding in his creeks" (Judges v. 17). It gave no judge nor ruler to Israel, but "Anna the prophetess," in New Testament times, "of the tribe of Aser" (Luke ii. 36), alone shines out of the obscurity of the tribe.

### VIII. *Tribe of Naphtali.*

53. ITS TERRITORY AND HISTORY (Josh. xix. 32-39). This was the most northern of all the tribes. It extended from Asher on the west, to the Sea of Gennesaret and the Jordan on the east; it was bounded on the south by Zebulun and Issachar; and on the north it reached far into Cælo-Syria, which is the valley between the two ranges of Lebanon. Traces of several of the fenced cities of Naphtali remain. The number of such cities is remarkable, but they were designed to protect the northern frontier of Palestine with a line of fortresses, as the south was protected by "the fenced cities of Judah." The waters of the Lake of Chinnereth "seem to have answered a purpose like that served by the Lake Lucerne between Italy and Germany." Thus we can understand the value to Naphtali of the "sea of the south" (Deut. xxxiii. 23) to compensate for

the sea of the west enjoyed by the other adjacent tribes. This district was the scene of a great part of our Lord's ministry. The people here, mingled with the Gentile races of Lebanon, were not distinguished by the strong prejudices which in the south raised such a barrier against Christianity. In the blessing of Jacob, Naphtali is compared to a "towering terebinth" of the uplands of Lebanon—(not to "a hind let loose")—"he putteth out good boughs" (Gen. xlix. 21), he is to be "satisfied with favours and full with the blessing of the Lord" (Deut. xxxiii. 23). But his grand opportunities were not turned to profitable account. It produced only one hero, Barak, of Kedesh-Naphtali, son of Abinoam, who dwelt in the mountain district (Judg. iv. 6). Naphtali, like Asher, afterwards "learned the works of the heathen" (Ps. cvi. 35). As our Lord travelled as far as "the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi," in the extreme north of Palestine, he must have preached in the cities of Naphtali. It is in New Testament times that these northern tribes emerge into the most interesting notice, for it is then we read of "the land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles," to which the long-promised light had come (Matt. iv. 15, 16).

### IX. *Tribe of Dan.*

54. **ITS TERRITORY AND HISTORY** (Josh. xix. 40-48). It was a small territory compressed into the narrow space between the north-western hills of Judah and the sea, and surrounded by the three powerful tribes of Ephraim, Judah, and Benjamin. It was one of the most fertile spots in Palestine, distinguished by its splendid corn-fields. Its cities are specially associated with the exploits of Samson. Japho, or Joppa, was the great harbour of Palestine, an ancient city, forming the northern boundary of Dan, and was thirty-six miles from Jerusalem.

Being bold and enterprising, the Danites, after Samson's death, "sought them an habitation to dwell in," on the extreme north of Palestine, where detached Canaanite communities offered an easy prey. Six hundred Danites, with their wives and children, marched to the foot of Mount Hermon, to Leshem or Laish, and found it occupied by a colony of Sidonians, separated by the Lebanon from the mother-city, and dwelling "quiet and secure." They burst upon the city, scaled its walls, burnt its houses, and killed its inhabitants (Judg. xviii. 7). "There was no deliverance," because "they were far from Sidon." The Danites then changed the name of the town from Laish to Dan. Jacob said, "Dan shall judge the people," which was fulfilled in the twenty years' rule of Samson; and "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Moses said, "Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan." Dan was to lie in wait for the invader from the north or from the south, either for the Philistines, as in Samson's day, or for the armies of Damascus and Nineveh, upon which he sprung from the heights of Bashan. In the fight against Sisera, Dan "remained in ships;" from which it would appear that the tribe dwelling on the shores of the Mediterranean had already to some extent entered on a sea-faring life. On taking Laish, the Danites, far from the religious centre of the nation, set up a graven image which they took from Micah in Mount Ephraim, who had a Levite for his priest, and "Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land" (Judg. xviii. 30, 31; Josh. xix. 47). Thus the Danites, in their isolation from the religious places of the south, set up a miniature Shiloh of their own. They sunk into incurable idolatry, and are thus omitted from the list of sealed tribes of the Apocalypse (Rev. vii.).

## X. *The Inheritance of Joshua.*

55. HIS MODEST REWARD (Josh. xix. 49-51). When Joshua had settled all the tribes, he obtained for himself a modest inheritance among the hills of his native tribe of Ephraim. It was a rugged spot in his native district at Timnath-serah—"the portion that remains"—the name being probably then applied to the spot as it was the last allotment. It is called Timnath-heres in Judg. ii. 9, probably from a transposition of the letters, and is here said to be "in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash." The site has been identified by some with the modern Tibneh, about seven hours north of Jerusalem, among the mountains of Ephraim. It was once a considerable town, for its site is still covered with extensive ruins. It is suggestive of the unselfishness and simplicity of Joshua's character that he should have selected a home for himself among the deep valleys and rugged hills of Timnath-serah. "First in service, last in reward." He had done a great work, yet received no exceptional recompense.

## XI. *Cities of Refuge.*

56. THEIR SITUATION, PRIVILEGES, AND IMMUNITIES (Josh. xx. 7-9). Six cities were appointed—literally "sanctified"—for the protection of the innocent or accidental manslayer (Num. xxxv. ; Deut. xix.). In ancient times, justice was executed by private hands, the duty of avenging blood devolving on the nearest kinsman of the murdered man. This system, which is still in force among the Arab tribes, and among the natives of Corsica in Europe, was a rude and imperfect method of dispensing justice ; for it made no distinction between murder and manslaughter and accidental homicide, while it gave the person charged no trial and perpetuated bloodshed, as it exposed the avenger of blood to the risk of death at the hands of the kinsman of the man he had slain.

The institution of cities of refuge was designed to mitigate these evils, while providing for the punishment of crime. It was an arrangement illustrative of the beneficent spirit of the Mosaic legislation. The six cities, which belonged to the Levites, had within them courts of assize, in which the manslayer, whether Hebrew or stranger, could have his case fully investigated "by the congregation in judgment," with the learned Levites sitting as assessors or judges, and the decision of the courts was altogether free from local bias or passion. If the offender stood free from the crime of murder, he remained secure from private vengeance within the walls of the city till the death of the High Priest. This was because the High Priest was the head of the theocracy, the representative of the covenant, his death holding a peculiar relation to the whole life of Israel, the covenant being renewed, as it were, with the appointment of the new High Priest. The decision of the courts in these cases prevented the evils of promiscuous protection which grew up around the asylums of Greece and Rome, and the sanctuaries of mediæval Europe. The six cities were almost equally remote from each other, and easy of access from all parts of the land, three of them being on one side of Jordan, and three on the other. Those in the west were Kedes in Naphtali, the most northern, Shechem in the middle, and Hebron in the south. Those in the east were Golan in Bashan, the most northern, which gave its name to the province of Gaulonitis, though its own site is unknown; Ramoth-Gilead in Gad, one of the strong fortresses commanding the region of Argob, where Jehu commanded the support of the priestly party in his rebellion (2 Kings ix. 14); and Bezer, nearly opposite Jericho, but its site is still undiscovered.

## XII. *The Inheritance of Levi.*

57. PROVISION FOR THE LEVITES (Josh. xxi.).  
Now that all the tribes had received their inheritance,

it was possible to apportion the lot of the Levites among them. As the representatives of the Hebrew faith, and the ministers of its worship, it was necessary that they should be distributed among the whole people. Yet, as too complete a dispersion might have neutralized their religious influence, they were collected into forty-eight cities scattered over the whole extent of the land. These cities, four in each tribe, with a circle of meadow-land called "suburbs," equal to about three hundred English acres, for the pasturage of their flocks, were assigned to their possession, in addition to the tithes, one-tenth of which, however, they paid to the priests "in acknowledgment of their higher consecration." Yet it would seem as if the cities actually belonged to the tribes in whose territory they lay, and that the Levites had merely a right to the houses they occupied. The purchaser of a house from the Levites was said to "redeem it" (Lev. xxv. 33), and the Levites were politically identified with the tribes to which their cities belonged (1 Sam. i. 1; Judg. xvii. 7). We have a list of these cities in 1 Chron. vi. 34-81, in which forty-two of the forty-eight cities are named, with some changes of names, which may be accounted for by the lapse of time or by the exchange of one city for another. There were three great families of Levites, the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites, who were descended from the three sons of Levi. The priests, who were descended from the Aaronite branch of the Kohathite family, were first provided for, and the lot gave them thirteen cities out of the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. As Jerusalem was to be the future religious centre of the nation, there seems a prophetic significance in the arrangement that kept the priests within a short distance of the ecclesiastical capital. It is also a suggestive fact that the other branches of the Kohathite family were provided for with ten cities in the territories of Ephraim, Dan, and Manasseh which immediately adjoined. The lot was next taken for

the Gershonites, who received thirteen cities out of the tribes of Manasseh East, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali; and the Merarites received twelve cities out of the tribes of Zebulun, Reuben, and Gad. Thus were the Levites scattered in Israel according to the prophecy of Jacob, but the curse was turned into a blessing for themselves, and for all the tribes. The national disruption under Jeroboam caused a marked concentration in their geographical position, for the Levites left all the cities assigned to them and gathered around Jerusalem (2 Chr. xi. 13, 14), thus hastening the corruption of the northern tribes, and imparting a more earnest life to Judah. They were henceforth politically as well as ecclesiastically powerful, and contributed greatly to maintain the spirit of religion even amidst the apostasies of individual kings. But the Levitical order itself degenerated, and would have sunk still more rapidly but for the powerful check supplied by the living voice of the prophets.

### XIII. *Return of the Transjordanic Tribes.*

**58. FINAL INCIDENT OF THE SETTLEMENT** (Josh. xxii. 1-34). The two tribes and a half had probably remained at Shiloh till the work of survey and allotment had been completed. It was now "a great many days" indeed since they had left their wives and families in the fortified cities across the Jordan. Joshua warmly commends them for their heroic service, and counsels them not to let their isolation make them forget their allegiance to the God of Israel. The tribes thus solemnly dismissed took their way homeward in the direction of the Jordan. According to the custom of those days, they resolved to erect an altar of stones in some conspicuous spot on the edge of the river, to be at once a tangible memorial of their oneness in religious belief with their western brethren, and of their claim to an equal



participation in all the ordinances of the Hebrew worship. The monument was accordingly erected on the western side of the river, not only as a sign of their rightful interest in the sanctuary which rested on that side, but "to forestall any assertion that the Jordan itself was a natural barrier of exclusion between them and the sanctuary." The altar was built on a lofty peak, projecting as it still does like a white bastion towards the river, some twenty miles north of Jericho, and close to the line of march from Shiloh to Gilead. It was an altar, "great to behold," that is, so high and large as to be seen afar. Its site has been lately discovered. It is an almost inaccessible mountain except from the north, visible from a very great distance. This innocent act was gravely misunderstood by the western tribes as an attempt, contrary to the Mosaic law, to build a second altar of sacrifice (Lev. xvii. 8). A bloody war might have ensued. But a deputation, consisting of Phinehas, the high priest, and ten princes of the tribes, quickly crossed the Jordan, and ascertained from their eastern brethren that they had no intention of erecting a sacrificial altar, but merely a permanent monument of their connection with the tribes across the river. The explanation was promptly accepted; a happy reconciliation ensued; and the altar itself became a perpetual witness of the event.

#### XIV. *Results of the Settlement.*

##### 59. SOCIALLY, POLITICALLY, RELIGIOUSLY.

It was the creation of a new society under circumstances without parallel in the history of the world. The Lord was the absolute owner of the land, for He said, "The land is mine" (Lev. xxv. 23). No Israelite had therefore any but a life interest in it; and agriculture became the basis of the theocratic community. The land was divided among the whole people, according to an arrangement which prevented

its being gathered up into the hands of a few to the impoverishment of the many. It could only be sold for a limited period, for it reverted every fifty years without purchase to the original owner. It might even be redeemed before that period at a value fixed in relation to the number of unexpired years. This law of Jubilee, giving each family a stake in the country, secured the political equality and independence of the nation, nourished a hardy patriotism, and guarded against the two evils of excessive wealth and excessive poverty. Thus Palestine became the home of an independent yeomanry residing on their hereditary farms, with boundaries that could not be touched by the hands of man. All the people lived on the produce of the flock or the field. There was no commerce, for the country was able to provide for its own wants; there was therefore little intercourse with foreign nations; and there was no room for the growth of a working class in a country without manufactures or foreign trade. Thus the two great causes of Oriental decay—luxury and slavery—were conspicuously absent. The twelve tribes originally existed as twelve separate republics under the government of their elders and priests. The kingly rule, though it imparted greater cohesion and vigour to the community, never destroyed the old tribal organisation, which was so pre-eminently favourable to the development of popular liberty. The Lord was still the absolute owner of the land, and the people were a great “kingdom of priests.” It was within the narrow boundaries of this small country so jealously secluded from the world that the most cosmopolitan of modern races was trained for its strange destiny. It is forty centuries since Abraham left Chaldea to found a great nation. That nation still survives, resisting every tendency to mingle with other races of men, and still numbering six or seven millions as in the days of the monarchy. It has been in contact with every people of ancient or modern

times which holds a leading place in human history, and it has felt the influence of them all, yet without losing anything of its marvellous distinctiveness. The strangest fact of all is that this race of men exists among us not "as hewers of wood and drawers of water" to other nations, but with an intellectual and moral vigour which places them in the front rank of men, as statesmen, financiers, philosophers, scholars, and musical composers. Their existence is a moral miracle. They are the living monuments of prophecy. They are the perpetual witnesses of Divine retribution. It is with the history of this most interesting race that the rise of the two dispensations of Judaism and Christianity is directly identified. We have already seen that the Hebrews required for their religious training and development an almost complete isolation from the rest of the world. Judaism was a great stage in the Divine revelation. It confessed the unity of God against the false gods of heathenism, and presented God as a living God in immediate relation with His people as Creator, Redeemer, and Guide. "Its basis is special revelation, its character monotheistic, its form theocratic, its public worship typico-symbolic, its tendency purely moral, its stand-point one of external authority, and at the same time one of conscious preparation for a higher development." The longing expectation of Judaism was satisfied in Christianity with its revelation of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate God and Redeemer of mankind. This one fact stamps the Hebrew nation with undying interest. His death and resurrection laid the foundations of the Christian Church, and the prophecy received its momentous fulfilment—"Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Thus the land where Joshua seated the tribes three-and-thirty centuries ago connects itself with the whole history and destinies of man.

QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *What different principles were adopted in the assignment of the inheritances of the tribes?*

2. *Show how the situation of each tribe affected its future fortunes.*

3. *What influence had the Jordan river upon the fortunes of the Eastern tribes?*

4. *Explain the historic interest of the Plain of Esdraelon.*

5. *How do we account for the omission of Simeon's name in the blessing of Moses, and of Dan's name in the list of the sealed tribes of the Apocalypse?*

6. *Describe the religious, judicial, and literary history of the Levites.*

7. *How were the Levites affected by the secession of the ten tribes?*

8. *Trace the social, political, and religious effects of the settlement of Palestine.*

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST DAYS OF JOSHUA.

60. HIS LAST WORK (Josh xxiii., xxiv.). After the conquest and division of the land, Joshua retired to his modest inheritance at Timnath-serah, among the hills of Ephraim, appointing no successor to his dignities, and spending the closing years of his long and eventful life in simple but honoured privacy. He claimed no higher authority over the tribes than to call them together after the lapse of some eighteen years—"a long time after that the Lord had given rest to Israel from their enemies round about"—when he gave two parting addresses, one to the rulers, probably at Shiloh, the other to the assembled tribes

at Shechem. They were both memorable meetings. He was, perhaps, the last link to connect the generation of the conquest with the generation of the exodus. He reminds the Israelites of the Lord's past goodness, exhorts them to courage and constancy, and warns them gravely against the dangers of intercourse with the heathen. His affectionate appeal was immediately answered by a solemn engagement on the part of the tribes to serve the Lord; and, as a visible memorial of the covenant, a large stone was set up "under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord"—the place consecrated ages before by Abraham as he passed through the land. This was the last public act of Joshua. His work both of war and of peace was done. Nothing remained for him but to die.

61. **DEATH AND BURIAL OF JOSHUA** (Josh. xxiv. 29, 30). We have no account of the circumstances of his death; merely this brief record—"Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and ten years old," just the age of his great ancestor Joseph. Five-and-twenty years after he had crossed the Jordan, he died at his own inheritance, full of years and honours. Like many another great warrior, he ended his days in peace. Then "they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in Mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash." This hill is mentioned again (2 Sam. xxiii. 30; 1 Chron. xi. 32), but its site has never been discovered. It is supposed by some that the tomb of Joshua is still to be seen at Tibneh. But later investigation is more doubtful about this identification, and favours the Jewish tradition, which fixes the site at the modern Kefr Haris, seven miles north of Shiloh. The soil of Palestine, already so rich with the dust of the good and great, would be henceforth dear to all who would venerate the name of Joshua. But death did not end his usefulness, as we infer from the suggestive sentence—"And Israel served the Lord all the days of

Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua." His last act was to bind the people firmly to God's service, and long after his death his earnest piety and zeal survived in the recollection of a people who were thus kept faithful to their obligations. The influence of his character is not yet exhausted. "He being dead yet speaketh." Christian thought now looks back with admiration upon a character without a parallel in the history of conquest. He must ever hold a foremost place among those Hebrew worthies who "through faith subdued kingdoms," and remain an example to all ages of that pre-eminent power of looking upward which strengthens all right means in carrying out God's work.

# Bible Class Primers.

EDITED BY PROFESSOR SALMOND, D.D.

---

Each Primer is a complete text-book on its subject arranged in sections, with maps, and questions for examination.

*Price, in Cloth, 8d. ; Paper, 6d.*

---

This Series is intended to provide text-books abreast of the scholarship of the day, but moderate enough in size and price to fit them for general use among young people under religious instruction at week-day and Sunday schools, and in Bible classes. It is meant not to conflict with any existing series, but to serve as a preparation for larger and costlier manuals. The volumes will be written by competent scholars, known for their interest in the young, and belonging to various branches of the Church of the Reformation.

---

## OPINIONS OF THE SERIES.

“For fulness of information, clearness of consideration, and for a complete and comprehensive view of the subject of which they treat, they are, as far as we know, *unique*. They need only to be better known to command a wide circulation in England as well as Scotland. Teachers of the senior classes in our Sunday schools could have no better preparation for their work, and if they would put them in the hands of the scholars and examine upon them, meanwhile giving such further explanatory remarks as their own more extended reading might suggest, the training would be much more satisfactory than it is at present.”—*Congregationalist*.

“The cheapness and adequate scholarship of these Bible Class Primers are calculated to secure for them a most useful sphere of influence. The name of the editor, Professor Salmond, at once guarantees their high quality and evangelical character.”—*Christian*.

“Will be of immense benefit to the cause of Bible knowledge throughout the land.”—*Daily Review*.

“The issue of such volumes in which trained professional skill puts itself at the service of babes marks a new and hopeful era in religious instruction.”—*Aberdeen Free Press*.

---

MACNIVEN & WALLACE, EDINBURGH.

# Bible Class Primers.

EDITED BY PROFESSOR SALMOND, D.D.

---

*Now Ready, Cloth, price 8d., Paper, 6d.*

**LIFE OF DAVID.** *Sixth Thousand.*

By the late Rev. PETER THOMSON, M.A., St Fergus.

**LIFE OF MOSES.** *Thirteenth Thousand.*

By the Rev. JAS. IVERACH, M.A., Aberdeen.

**LIFE OF PAUL.** *Fifth Thousand.*

By the Rev. J. PATON GLOAG, D.D., Galashiels.

**THE LIFE AND REIGN OF SOLOMON.** *Ninth Thousand.*

By the Rev. RAYNER WINTERBOTHAM, M.A., LL.B., B.Sc., Fraserburgh.

**THE KINGS OF ISRAEL.** *Third Thousand.*

By the Rev. W. WALKER, M.A., Monymusk.

**THE HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION—**

By the Rev. Professor WITHEROW, Londonderry.

**JOSHUA AND THE CONQUEST—**

By the Rev. Professor CROSKERY, Londonderry.

**THE KINGS OF JUDAH—**

By the Rev. Professor GIVEN, Ph.D., Londonderry.

---

**BIBLE WORDS AND PHRASES.**

By CHARLES MICHIE, M.A., Aberdeen.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth, price 1s.

---

MACNIVEN & WALLACE,

132 PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH.



# Bible Class Primers.

EDITED BY PROFESSOR SALMOND, D.D.

*In Preparation.*

ABRAHAM AND THE PATRIARCHAL AGE—

By the Rev. Professor A. B. BRUCE, D.D., Glasgow.

LIFE AND TIMES OF JOSEPH—

By the Rev. JAMES DODDS, D.D., Edinburgh.

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES—

By the Rev. Professor PATERSON, M.A., Edinburgh.

THE EXILE AND THE RETURN—

By the Rev. Professor A. B. DAVIDSON, D.D., Edinburgh

THE PROPHETS OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY—

By the Rev. W. ROBERTSON SMITH, LL.D.

THE TABERNACLE AND THE TEMPLE—

By JAMES BURGESS, LL.D., F.R.G.S.

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY LAND—

By the Rev. S. R. MACPHAIL, M.A., Liverpool.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE OLD  
AND NEW TESTAMENTS—

By the Rev. Professor J. GIBB, M.A., London.

THE GOSPEL PARABLES—

By the Rev. DAVID SOMERVILLE, M.A., Rothesay.

OUTLINES OF EARLY CHURCH HISTORY—

By the Rev. H. WALLIS SMITH, D.D., Kirknewton.

SCOTTISH CHURCH HISTORY—

By the Rev. G. JOHNSTONE, B.D., Liverpool.

*The following Subjects will also be embraced in  
the Series :—*

THE GOSPEL MIRACLES.

THE TWELVE.

THE LIFE OF OUR LORD.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD AND NEW TESTA-  
MENTS.

OUTLINES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

THE PLANTING OF THE CHURCH.

OUTLINES OF THE HISTORY OF MISSIONS.

MACNIVEN & WALLACE,

132 PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH.

